Mercy in her Beauty:

OR,

THE HEIGHT OF A DELIVERANCE FROM THE DEPTH OF DANGER.

Set forth in the first SERMON *Preached upon that Occasion,*

By NATH: HARDY, Master of Arts, and Preacher to the Parish of S. *Dionis Back-Church.*

PSAL. 118. 17, 18, 19.

I shall not die, but live, and declare the Works of the Lord.
The Lord hath chastened me very sore, but he hath not given me over to death.
Open unto me the gates of righteousnesse, I will goe into them, and I will praise the Lord.

Basil. Mag. Hom. 9.

Δεῖ ἡμᾶς μὴ ἐκκακεῖν ἐν τοῖς θλίψεσιν ἀλλ' ἀναμένειν τὴν ἀγαθόλιψιαν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Aug. in Psal. 41.

Quia magis crebra sunt mala, dulcior erit misericordia tua. Etenim scriptum est quodam loco speciosa misericordia Domini in tempore tribulationis, sicut nubes pluviæ in tempore siccitatis.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. G.* for *Nath: Web* and *Will: Grantham*, at the *Black Beare* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, neere the little North-Doore. 1653.

(4).36

Sermons Preached and Printed by Mr Nathanaell Hardy *M. A. and Preacher to the Parish of* St Dyonis Back-Church.

Justice Triumphing, or *The Spoilers spoiled:* A Sermon preached on the 5th of *November* in the Cathedrall Church of St *Pauls*.

The Arraignment of licentious Liberty and oppressing Tyranny, in a Sermon at a Fast before the Lords in Parliament; In the Abbey-Church at *Westminster*.

Faiths Victory over Nature, A Sermon preached at the Funerals of Mr *John Rushout* Junior.

The safest Convoy or *The strongest Helper*, A Valedictory Sermon before the Right Honourable Sr *Thomas Bendish* Barronet, his Majesties Ambassadour to the grand Seigniour at *Constantinople*.

A Divine Prospective representing the Just mans peacefull End, A Sermon at the Funerall of the Right Worshipfull Sr *John Gayr* Knight.

Love and Fear the inseparable Twins of a blest Matrimony, A Sermon occasioned by the Nuptials between Mr *William Christmas* and Mrs *Elizabeth Adams*.

Divinity in Mortality, or *The Gospels excellency and the Preachers frailty*, A Sermon at the Funerals of Mr *Richard Goddard* Minister of the Parish of St *Gregories* by *Pauls*.

Printed, and are to be sold by *Nathanaell Webb* and *William Grantham* at the black Bear in St *Pauls* Church-yard near the little North-door, 1653.

To the *Right Worſhipfull, Worſhipfull,* and *Wel-beloved,* The Inhabitants of the *Pariſh* of S. *Dionis Back-Church, Health* and *Wealth,* not *only in* this life, *but* chiefly *in that which is to come.*

Worthy Friends,

IT *is a full* Decade *of* yeers *ſince I firſt was* called *by* Divine *Providence to* begin *the* work *of my* Miniſtry *among* you: *and it is not yet* half *ſo many* months, *ſince in* humane *probability both my* Miniſtry *and* life *ſeemed to be at an* end: *But the wiſe and gracious* God (*in whoſe* hands *all our* times *are*) *hath mercifully* lengthned *my* dayes (bleſſed be his name) *for the greater* good *of my* own, *and* (*I* hope) *of* your ſouls. *Pſal.* 31.15.

Theſe Sermons *which upon this comfortable* occaſion *I lately* preached, *were by ſome of you* deſired *to be made* more publique, *which I have* fulfilled, *ſo much the more* willingly, *that I might* teſtifie *before the* world, firſt, *my infinite* obligation *to Almighty* God *for ſo remarkeable a* deliverance; *and withall my manyfold* engagements *to a great part of* you *for your affectionate* love, *and multiplyed* courteſies.

And now (my Dearely Beloved, and longed for in the Lord) *give me* leave (*having this* opportunity) *to* acquaint *you with my ſerious* thoughts *and earneſt* deſires, *and I* truſt *through* Gods grace *that the* tranſcript *of them before your* eyes, *will helpe to make a deeper* impreſſion *of them upon your* hearts.

And firſt, I thanke my God through Jeſus Chriſt *for your* ſtedfaſtneſſe *in the* faith, *and your* mutuall amity, *whereby you become* exemplary *to many* pariſhes *in this* wavering *and* contentious *age. Oh that not* onely you,

but all *the* people *of this* Land *were* alike minded, one
Rom. 15.5. towards another according to Christ Jesus.

Next, let me in the bowels *of our* common Saviour
2 Tim. 4 1. beseech you, *and if this will not* prevaile, charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall Judge the quicke and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdome; *that as you* drinke *in the heavenly* raine *which* commeth oft upon you, *so you endeavour to* bring forth
Heb. 6.7. herbes meet *for the great* husbandman *who* dresseth *you*.
I beare *you* record (*and that without* flattery) *you are* at-
Jam. 1.22. tentive hearers, *oh that you may be all* forward doers of the word.

There are some *amongst* you *whose* love *towards me*
1 Joh. 3. 18. *hath been*, not onely in tongue and in word but in deed, *and that in a* more *than* ordinary measure. *But yet, let me* freely *tell you. There is nothing* (if I know my owne heart) *would so* rejoyce *me as to* see *the* fruit *of my weake* labours, *in the* holinesse *of your* lives. *Beleeve it, this is the* greatest Kindnesse *a* people *can* show *to their* Minister, *since whereas by a* liberall contribution *they* adde *to his comfortable* subsistence *upon* earth, *by a* religious conversation, *they* increase *his eternall* reward *in* heaven.

Act. 20. 32. And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are
Rom. 15.30. sanctified, *humbly intreating you to* strive together with me in your prayers to God *both for* me *and your* selves, *that* I *may* so preach *and* live, *you may* so heare *and* doe, *as that we may* behold each other, *and* all *of* us our Redeemer *with* joy *in the* last day. *So prayeth*

Your faithfull servant for
Christs sake in the Gospel,
NATH: HARDY.

Phil. 2. 27. the former part.

For indeed he was ſick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him.

IF you pleaſe to peruſe the *five* laſt *Pſalms* of *David*, you ſhall finde them *beginning* and *ending* with an *Hallelujah*: *Praiſe ye the Lord*, being the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Prora* and the *Puppis*, the *firſt* and the *laſt* words of each. Not much unlike is Saint *Pauls* practiſe in the *Epiſtle* to the *Romans*, who almoſt in the very entrance placeth an εὐχαριστῶ, *I thanke my God through Jeſus Chriſt*, and cloſeth with a θεῶ δόξα, *To God onely wiſe bee glorie through Jeſus Chriſt*. In imitation of theſe patternes I ſhall place *Thanksgiving*, both in the *Front* and *Reere* of my Diſcourſe. Indeed what fitter *Proœmium* to a *gratulatorie* Sermon than a *Benedictus*? *Bleſſed* therefore *be God*, who kept his *unworthie* Servant from *falling* into the *Grave*, a *Land* of *Silence* and *Forgetfulneſſe*, and hath now vouchſafed him the *libertie* of entring into his *Houſe*, the *place* of *Prayers* and *Praiſes*. *Bleſſed be God*, who hath brought my *feet* from *lying* in a *ſick* bed to ſtand in this holy *Mount*. Finally *bleſſed be God*, who hath given me a joyfull *occaſion* of *handling*, and juſt *cauſe* of *applying* this *Scripture* to *my ſelfe*, by changing the *third* Perſon unto the *firſt*; *For indeed I was ſick nigh to death, but God had mercy on me.* Rom. 8. 16, 17.

This *Text* naturally ſpreadeth forth it ſelfe into *two* maine

 boughes,

boughs, each of which have *three branches* ſprouting from them.

Here is obſervable a *Diſtreſſe*, and a *Deliverance*; a *Danger*, and an *Eſcape*, an *Affliction*, and a *Liberation*: the *former* in thoſe words, *He was ſick nigh to death*; the *latter* in theſe, *but God had mercy on him.*

In the *Diſtreſſe* we have obſervable, the

1. *Quality* of the *Danger* what it was, in the word *Sick.*

2. *Extremity* of the *Meaſure*, how great it was, in thoſe words *nigh unto death.*

3. *Eminency* of the *Perſon*, whom it befell, in the relative *hee.*

In the *Deliverance* we have conſiderable, the

1. *Efficiency* of the *Author*, by whom it was conferred, in the Word *God.*

2. The *excellency* of the *Benefit*, how expreſſed, in thoſe words *had mercy on him.*

3. The *opportunity* of the *Time*, when vouchſafed, in the exceptive *but.*

Theſe are the ſeverall *Branches* of this Sacred *Tree*, into which I have *climbed* by the *Ladder* of *humane* induſtry, from which by the *hand* of *Divine* aſſiſtance I have *gathered*, and by the ſame hand ſhall now *ſcatter* among you ſuch *Fruit* as hath refreſhed my *owne*, and (I hope through Gods bleſſing) will nouriſh *your* ſoules; and ſo I begin with the

Gen. 1. *Diſtreſſe*, *He was ſick nigh to death*; and therein the quality of the *danger* in that word *ſick.*

The *Philoſopher*, obſerving the *property* of mans *conſtitution*, deſcribeth him by *riſibile*, to be a reaſonable living Creature, that hath the onely power of *laughing*; but the *Divine* conſidering the *miſery* of mans *condition* no leſſe, aptly characterizeth him by *flebile*, an unfortunate wretch, that hath the moſt cauſe of *weeping*: In this reſpect it is not unfitly taken notice of, how the new-born *Babe* commeth into the world *crying*, as if by the *language* of its preſent *tears*, it would *foretell* the ſadneſſe of its future *ſorrowes.*

Vagitus; locum lugubri complet ut æquum eſt, cui tantum in vitâ reſtat transire malorum. Lucr.

Among thoſe many *evills* with which the *life* of man is beſet, this of *ſickneſſe* is *one.*

Aug in Pſ. 111 *One* to which *all* are ſubject, *quis non ægrotat in hac vitâ? quis*

quis languorem non experitur ? naſci in hoc corpore mortali incipere ægrotare eſt : Who in this life doth not more or leſſe taſt of *ſickneſſe ?* yea from the *Cradle* to the *Crutch*, *Birth* to *Death*, *Wombe* to the *Tombe*, we are *continually* liable to it.

One of which we may ſay, as *Leah* of *Gad*, *A Troop cometh*, and to which that *Devils* name in the *Goſpel* may fitly be applyed *Legion :* The *Poet* inſtancing in *one* kind of *diſeaſe*, ſpeaketh of a *band* of *Feavers*, Gen. 30. 11. Mark 5. 9.

Nova febrium,
Terris incubuit cohors : *Horat od. 3.*

And *Galen* reckoning up the diſeaſes to which *one* part of mans *body*, the *eye* is ſubject, numbreth 112. how great an *Army* then muſt this *Commander* have, who begirteth this *Caſtle* of the *Body* in *every* part and corner, and that with ſeverall *Souldiers* ! No wonder if the holy tongue, as it calleth men מתים which ſignifieth *dying men*, becauſe they are continually under the power of *death*, ſo it ſtyles them אנשים *ſickly men*, becauſe they are expoſed to ſuch variety of *ſickneſſes*.

φυγαδευτέον ἀπὸ μὲν σώματος νόσον ἀπὸ δὲ ψυχῆς ἀμαθίαν, κοιλείας δὲ πολυτελείαν πόλεως δὲ στάσιν, οἴκου δὲ διχοφρυσύνην. *Pythag. Apo. in Iambl.*

Finally *one* which *exceedeth* all thoſe other *miſeries* of this preſent *life*, what *diſſention* is in a *City*, *diſcord* in a *Family*, *ſurfetting* to the *Stomach*, *ignorance* to the *Minde*, that is *ſickneſſe* to the *Body*, diſturbing and oppreſſing it; yea, it is the *worſt* evill of *cold*, *hunger*, and *nakedneſſe*, of *heat*, *thirſt*, and *warmnes*, that they *haſten* upon us *ſickneſſe* and *death*.

κακῶν τὸ ἀπευκτότατον καὶ βαρύτατον κακὸν ἡ νόσος ἐστὶ κατάφορον τοῖς πολλοῖς πεφυκυῖα. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

That I may the better *open* this *diſtreſſe*, give me leave to *delineate* it both in the *effects* that flow from it, and the *cauſe* from which it floweth.

There are *two* grievous *attendants* which *ſickneſſe* commonly bringeth along with her, namely *paine* and *weakneſſe*; by *paine* it taketh away the *comfort* of all enjoyments, even of life it ſelfe; *Barzillai* being *old*, ſaid to the *King*, *Can thy Servant taſte what I eat, or what I drink ? Can I heare any more the voice of ſinging men, and ſinging women ? wherefore ſhould thy ſervant be a burden to my Lord the King ?* Not much unlike may it be ſaid of the *ſick* man, *Can he eat, or can he drinke ? Can muſick, or any other pleaſures then delight him,* 2 Sam 19. 35. *Tria hæc in omni morbo gravia ſunt, metus mortis, dolor corporis, intermiſſio voluptatis.* Sen. Ep. 77.

when he is a burthen to himſelfe? And as by reaſon of *paine*, it renderth life *uncomfortable*, ſo by reaſon of *weakneſſe*, *unſerviceable*, diſenabling the body from the performance of any work: Alas, how can the *Clock* go when the *Weights* are plucked off? or the *Watch* move right, when the *Wheels* are out of order?

Both theſe ſad *effects* are fitly expreſſed by two *words*, the *one* in the *Hebrew*, the *other* in the *Greek* tongue, and it is the *word* which our *Apoſtle* here uſeth. The *Hebrew* word-- חלה ſignifieth both *doluit* and *ægrotavit*, to be *ſick*, and to be *ſorry*: well are they expreſſed by one word, ſince they commonly go together, both ſmarting *paine* in the *Body*, and dolorous *anguiſh* in the *Mind* being cauſed by *ſickneſſe*; in this reſpect the *Engliſh* word *diſeaſe*, is very *appoſite*, becauſe it diſeaſeth and diſturbeth the perſon; of this *David* complained in his *ſickneſſe*, when he ſaith, *My bones are vexed, and my ſoule is alſo ſore vexed.* The *Greek* word ἀσθένω implyeth both *ægrotari*, and *imbecillem eſſe*, to be *ſick*, and to be *weak*, and therefore the *Noun* of this *Verbe* is elſewhere rendred *infirmity*: this inconvenience likewiſe *David* found by his *diſeaſe*, when he ſaid, *I am feeble, and ſore broken*; *weaknes* being the inſeparable concomitant of *ſicknes*.

Pſal. 6. 2, 3.

Mat. 9 17. Pſal. 38. 8.

Quando hæc tam gravia faciet vicino jam exitu, etiam à medicorum actione excluſus, fatiſcente jam corpore ubi exercebit diſtrictionis officium cenſor animus Salv. *ad Eccl. Catholi.* l. 1. Iam. 5.

Meditations, wch (*I would to God*) were more deeply *imprinted* on the mindes of men, *thoſe eſpecially*, who put off their *repentance*, and the *Working out* of their *ſalvation* till a *ſick* bed, as if when they are in *paine*, they could *repent* with the more *eaſe*, or when they are *weakeſt*, they were *ſtrong* enough for this *work*: Alas, doe you not know how *unfit* ſuch a time is for *any*, but much more a *religious* employment? This no doubt is *one* reaſon why Saint *James*, who in other *afflictions* adviſeth men to *pray* for themſelves, in *ſickneſſe* counſelleth them to *call for the Elders of the Church to pray* over them, becauſe then for the moſt part they are *unable* to pray themſelves: in this reſpect it was (as I have read) the *ſaying* of a vertuous *Gentlewoman* upon her *ſick* bed, *Let none defer their preparation nor their prayers unto the bed of their ſickneſſe, for then the minde is too much troubled with grief of body to be employed, as they ought, in ſpiritual exerciſe. Tell me*, whoever thou art that delayeſt till *this* time, how knoweſt thou, but ſuch a *ſickneſs* may ſeize upon thee

Langhorn's ſun. Serm. of M. Mary Swaine.

thee as in a moment, may *take* away thy *life?* or if not, *bereave* thee of thy *ſenſes?* or it may be ſo *painfull*, that it is *all* thou *canſt* do to *wreſtle* with the *paine*; nay, let me tell thee, for the moſt part ſuch *procraſtinators*, when that time commeth, either repent *not at all* in their *ſickneſſe*, or it proveth but a *ſickly* repentance. Oh then *(my Brethren!)* be *wiſe* in *time*, doe not lay the *greateſt* load on the *feebleſt* horſe, put not the *weakeſt* ſervant to the *hardeſt* labour, put not off the *maine buſineſſe* of thy *ſoules health* to the dolefull time of thy *bodies ſickneſſe*.

Quia deus non irridetur, ipſe ſe decipit qui mortem multis temporibus vixit & ad quærendam vitam ſe. mivivus aſſurgit & tunc offi. o. ua appetet quando dominica ſervituti omnia corporis & anima ſubtrahuntur officia. Fault. Epiſt. prima.

You have heard what *ſickneſſe doth*, or rather *undoeth*; it would not be amiſſe to enquire *whence* it came, and how it was brought into the world. Indeed (as *Chriſt* ſaith in another caſe) *it was not ſo from the beginning*. *Man* in *innocency* was created with a *body* of ſo *equall* and laſting a *temperature*, that (had he not *ſinned*) it had neither been *taken downe* by *death*, nor *put* out of *frame* by *ſickneſſe*. *Sinne* it is which is *fons Mali, morbi, mortis*, hath brought in *evill* inſtead of *good*, *death* of *life*, and *ſickneſſe* of *health*. The *Phyſitian* being asked the *cauſe* of *Diſeaſes*, anſwereth, and moſt truly, *mali humores*, *evill humors in the body*. But the *Divine* reſolveth it more fully, *mali mores*, *ill manners in the life*. *Phyloſophy* teacheth, and *Experience* confirmeth it, that *paſſiones animæ ſequuntur temperamentum corporis*; the *mindes paſſions* much *follow* the *bodyes temper*. *Divinity* preacheth no leſſe *truly*, that the *diſorder* of the *body followeth* upon the *diſtemper* of the *minde*; Mans *ſoule* was firſt *ſick of ſinne*, and ſo the *body* becommeth infected with *ſickneſſe for ſinne*. It was the *firſt* ſinne of *Adam* which *brought forth*, and it is our owne actuall ſinnes that *nouriſh* this degenerate *Brat*, wherewith *mankinde* is ſo miſerably *infeſted*.

Cum omnes homines velint fœlicitatem in fine vitæ ſuæ accipere, vix pauci eos videmus eam ſecundum quod deſiderant adipiſci. Elig. de can. dom: hom. ſext.

A *Meditation*, which (if well pondered) would learne us to beare *ſickneſſe* whenſoever it commeth upon us *without murmuring*, and yet *with mourning*.

1. Why ſhouldſt thou *repine* at *God* when any *diſeaſe* ſeizeth one thee? True, he is the *efficient*, but thou art the *meritorious* cauſe; he *inflicteth*, but it is *ſinne* that *deſerveth*; he *puniſheth*, but it is not till thou haſt *provoked* him, *blame* not his

Nihil eſt quod de calamitatibus noſtris Deo imputare poſſumus, nos calamitatum

noſtrarum au-ctores ſumus. Salv. de Gub. l. 8

à Deo punimur ſed ipſi facimus ut puniamur. id ibid.

Jerem. 4. 18.

juſtice, but thank thy owne *wickedneſſe*, the *Moth* that *frets* the *garment* is *bred* of it; the *Tree* giveth *life* to that *Worme* which *killeth* it. *Thy ſickneſſe*, oh man, is *of thy ſelfe*, *and thy owne wayes and doings are they which procure theſe things to thee.*

2. When *ſickneſſe ſmiteth* thy *body*, let *repentance ſmite* thy *thigh*; when the *diſeaſe rageth* in thy *members*, let thy *ſoule* be *angry* at thy *ſinne*, and as thou *complaineſt* of the *effect*, ſo labor to be *ſenſible* of the *cauſe*: νόσ& παιδαγωγία πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον ſaith the *Divine* excellently, *ſicknes* is an wholſome *Diſcipline*, it is ſo when it *teacheth* us to *know* our *folly*. *Happy* diſeaſe which *openeth* our *eyes* at once to *ſee*, and *weep* for our *ſinnes*; *Oh my ſoule, it is ſinne hath cauſed thy body to feele ſickneſſe, let ſickneſſe cauſe thee to feele the weight of ſinne; it is wickedneſſe hath brought this weakneſſe, let this weakneſſe bring thee to a ſight and ſenſe of thy wickedneſſe, why ſhouldſt thou hold that ſword in thy hand, which hath ſo ſorely wounded it? or hug that ſerpent in thy boſome, which hath ſo painfully ſtung thee? rather ſince the fruit is ſo bitter, pluck up the root, and let not ſin reigne any longer in thy mortal body, ſeeing it hath made thy body ſo mortall.* And ſo much for the *quality* of the *danger*: I paſs on to the

Gr. Naz. Epiſt 70.

Extremity of the *meaſure*, *nigh unto death.*

Mortem omni ætati communem eſſe ſentio. Cic. de Senect. *Tum trepidamus cum propè à vobis creditmus eſſe mortem, à quo propè non eſt parata omnibus locis omnibuſque nominibus.* Sen. Epiſt 30. *Tres ſunt mortis, caſus, infirmitas, ſenectus, caſus nuntiat mortem latentem, infirmitas opem eripit, ſenectus præſentem.* Hugo de S. vict. de clauſt. An.

It is that, which in ſome ſenſe is true of *every* man alive, this *world* is a *region* of *Ghoſts*, dying men, yea, *young* men in the prime of their dayes, *ſtrong* men in the full vigour of their age, are *nigh to death*, becauſe *death* may then be neer to them. The *Philoſopher* being ask'd what he thought of *life*, *turn'd* him *round* and *vaniſhed* out of *ſight*, thereby intimating, how eaſily and ſpeedily life may be taken away: and ſome of them have no leſſe truly than aptly repreſented the *diſtance* between *life* and *death* by *oculus*, *apertus* and *clauſus*, an *eye* open and ſhut, which is done in a *moment*. But though this in ſome reſpect be verified of all men, yet it is more eſpecially true of two ſorts of perſons, to wit, *old* men, and *ſick* men, ſinte *old age* is νόσ& φυσικὴ a *naturall diſeaſe*, and a *diſeaſe* is γῆρας ἐπιπλῆκτον an *accidentall old age*, *both* muſt needs tend and *haſten* to *death*.

As for *old* men, they are ſo *nigh to death*, that the *Proverbe* ſaith, *they have one foot in the grave, young* men may dye *ſoon*, but *they cannot* live *long*; the *dimneſſe* of light in their *eyes*, and *vapours* that ſometimes are drawne up into their *braines*, argue the *Sun* of their *life* to be *ſetting*, the hoary *froſt*, or rather white *ſnow* upon their *heads*, proclaimes that the *winter* of their *deaths* is approaching. The more *ſtrange* it is to ſee them *doting* on, who are *going out* of the *world*, and as if they could ſet up *under ground*, their *mindes* are moſt *earthly* whileſt their *bodies* are ready to *drop* into the *earth*: the more *ſad* it is to think how both *unwilling* and *unfit* they are to *die*, who yet are ſo *unlikely* to *live*; and as if with the *Eagle* they could *renew their youth*, they *flatter* themſelves in *hope* of *life*, when yet they are as it were within *ſight* of *death*; how ſhort are ſuch *men* of that *heathen Seneca*, who ſaid of *himſelfe*, *ante ſenectutem curavi bene vivere, in ſenect ute bene mori*, my care in *youth* was to *live*, but in *old* age to *die well*, then no doubt perceiving his *death* to be *at hand*.

Nihil habet quod ſperet quem ſenectus duxit ad mortem Sen. Ep. 30

Quemadmodum ſenectus adolescentiam ſequitur, ita mors ſenectutem. Ibid

Pedetentim mortior dixit Alexis ſenex lente incedens.

Charon me momordit dixit Daemonax ſenex pro cane, innuens ſenectutem morti vicinam. Eraſm. Apoth. l. 6. & 8.

As *old* men, be they never ſo *well*, ſo *ſick* men, by they never ſo *young*, are *nigh to death*; what *Anacharſis* ſaid of *Seamen*, that he knew not whether to reckon them among the *living* or the *dead*, is no leſſe true of *ſick* men, who indeed are *not dead*, becauſe they *breath*, and yet *not living* becauſe not *luſty*; *every* man carrieth *death* in his *boſome*, but the *ſick* man at his *backe*, or rather in his *armes* before his *face*.

τὸ ζῆν γὰρ ὅσους ὁρᾷς ὡς ὄ γε ἐσικὼν ἐξ. Crat. Antiph.

Juvenibus incertus hujus vitæ terminus inſtat, ſenibus vero certus maturior ex hac luce exitus breviter concordat Cypr. de 12. abuſ. &c.

In ſumme there is a three-fold *propinquity* of *death*, *poſſible*, *probable*, *certaine*; it is *poſſible the healthieſt*, *ſtrongeſt*, and *youngeſt* may *dye quickly*; it is *certaine old* men (though they out-live far younger) cannot *live long*; and it is *probable* that the *ſick* mans *death* is *at hand*.

But yet *this* in the *proper* ſenſe is *not true* of *all ſickneſſes*, that *diſtinction* of *ſinne* cannot hold in *Divinity*, according to the *Popiſh* acception, that ſome are *veniall*, others *mortall*, ſince S. *Paul* ſaith indefinitely, and meaneth it uniuerſally, that *death* is the *wages* of *ſin*, but *Analogically* it is true in *Phyſick* of *diſeaſes*; ſome are onely *painfull*, others *mortall*, the *Gout* in the *Toe*, a *pain* in the *Teeth*, a *prick* in the *Finger*; theſe, *though* they cauſe *pain*, yet are *not* in their owne nature *deadly*,

ἐφωλιδεῖς πόλεις εἰσὶν οἱ ζῶντες ἢ οἱ νεκροὶ ἔφη τὰς πλείους τῶν ἐν τῇδῃ. Diog laert. l. 1.

ly, nor is the *patient* accounted the *neerer* death for them.

Beſides, of *mortall diſeaſes* there is a *difference*, ſome are a *long* time *untwiſting*, others in a *ſhort* time *cut* aſunder the *thread* of *life*: thus the *Dropſie* is a *great* while in *drowning*, the *Palſie* in *ſhaking* downe, and the *Conſumption* in *drying* up the *body*, whileſt the *Feaver* in a *few dayes burneth*, and an *Apoplexie*, or *Apoſteme* in a *few houres ſuffocate* it.

And yet once more in *violent diſeaſes*, there is a *difference*, we do not ſay of *every* man whom a *Feaver* ſmiteth, that he is preſently *nigh to death*; whileſt the *body* is *vigorous*, the *Phyſick proſperous*, we account the *patient hopefull*; but thoſe, in whom the *virulency* of the *diſeaſe* ſo *farre* prevaileth, as that both the *ſtrength* of *Nature*, & *skill* of *Art* ſeem *unable* to *grapple* with it, are only and juſtly looked upon as *nigh to death*.

ἠρκυδὲ ὕτε ἰατρῶν τέκναι ἔτε θερα-πεια πᾶσα προσαγωμὴν. Gr. Naz. Orat. 19.

Such, no doubt, was *Epaphroditus* his caſe, for though ſome conceive this danger might ariſe from *ſtripes* and ſcourges, which *Nero* ſhould *command* to be *inflicted* on *him* at *Rome*, yet it is more rationally and generally concluded, that ſome *violent ſickneſſe*, by reaſon of a *long journy*, had ſeized upon him; and though it is *likely* this *good man* was not *negligent* (according as *ability* and *opportunity* was afforded) to *uſe meanes*, yet the *diſeaſe* did ſo *increaſe*, that as to life his *condition* was *deſperate*, and therefore S. *Paul* ſaith of him *he was nigh unto death*.

For ſitan quia verberatus eſt ab infidelibus in miniſterio. Anſelm. in loc. Chyſoſt. in v. 29.

Humana fragilitatis nimia in proſperis rebus oblivio eſt. Qu. Curt. l. 4.

To this *low* and weake eſtate is *God* pleaſed many times to *bring* men among *others*, chiefly for a *double end*, and that he may *minde* them of their *diſſolution*, and *quicken* them in their *devotion*.

ἵνα ἡμῖν ὦσι τὰς ἀθεσίας ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματα. Greg. Naz.

Of *all things* we are very prone to *forget* our *latter end*, and therefore *God* by ſickneſſe puts us *in minde* of it, we are apt to put *death farre* from us, and therefore by ſome grievous diſeaſe *God* bringeth us *nigh to death*; *a preſumption*, we ſhall not dye *yet*, maketh us not think of dying *at all*, and whileſt *marrow* is in our *bones*, *colour* in our *faces*, *appetite* in our *ſtomachs*, *ſtrength* in our *joynts*, *health* in our *bodyes*, we *eaſily* perſwade our ſelveswe ſhall not dye *yet*; no mervaile, if to *fixe* our *eyes* upon the *Grave*, *God chaſten us with paine upon our Bed, ſo that*

that our life abhorreth bread, our flesh consumeth away, and our soule draweth neare to the grave. It was the *confession* of *Alexander*, when *let blood* with an *arrow*: *All men call me* Jupiters *Sonne, but this wound proclaimes me a mortall man*: and yet more *divine* was that of *Antigonus*, who acknowledged his *disease* to be sent as a *Monitor*, lest otherwise he might have growne *insolent* through the *forgetfulnesse* of *mortality*. *Sicknesses* especially, when *desperate*, are *warning peices* to tell us the *murdering peice* of death is ready to *destroy*, every *ach tolls* the *Bell*, but *these*, as it were, *dig* the *grave*, and cry *dust to dust*; and good reason it is, that when we *cast* the *thought* of *death* behinde our *backs*, *death* it selfe should by these *diseases looke* us in the *face*, and as it were, *pluck* us by the *throat*. Iob 33.18.19.20. *Omnes (inquit* Alexander *sagittiferum) juvant me* Jovis *esse filium, sed hoc vulnus hominem esse me clamat.* Sen. Ep. 59. Ἀντίγονος νοσήσας ἐν ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ χείρονα, ὑπέμνησε γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἡ νόσος μὴ μέγα φρονεῖν ὡς ὄντας θνητούς. *Plut. Apoth.*

2. In *health* we are no lesse apt to *forget God* than our *selves*, but *sicknesse mindeth* us of *him*, in *prosperity* perhaps we *mumble* over a *Pater Noster*, but *adversity* teacheth us to *cry Abba Father*: *Lord*, saith the *Prophet*, *in trouble have they visited thee*, they who before were *strangers*, now would bee *familiar* with *God*, and give him a *visit*; *they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them*, it may be before they did *say* a *prayer*, but now they *poure out* a *prayer*. Isa. 26, 16.

Though *man* by the *formation* of his *body* be made with an *erect* countenance, yet he seldome *looks up* to *heaven* till some *disease* hath laid him upon his *back*; nor yet many times will a *slight* sickenesse prevaile: *God* promiseth himselfe concerning his *people*, *in their affliction they will seeke me early*, *but* for the *most* part it proveth *otherwise*; *ubi desinit medicus, ibi incipit Theologus*, the *Divine*'s work *begins* not with many till the *Physitian*'s is *done*, it is *late* enough not to seeke *God* till *affliction* comes, and yet we *seeke God* not *early*, but *late* in *affliction*. The *Woman* in the *Gospell* sick of a *bloudy Issue*, goeth not to *Christ* till she had *spent all* (and that to no purpose) *upon Physitians*, the *Prodigall* thinketh not of *going home* to his *Father*, till he is brought so low, that he would faine be *fed* with *husks*, but *cannot get* them: nor doe many *lift* up their *eyes* or *hands* to *heaven*, till they are scarce able to *lift* up *either*. Indeed *necessity* is an excellent *Mistris*, especially Hos. 5. *ult.* Luk. 8. 43. Luk. 15. 16. εἷδες τῆς θλίψεως τὸ κέρδος καὶ ὅτι πρὸς ἀνάγκην καθαρόν. *Chrys. in Psal.* 119. χρεία δίδάσκει κάν ἄμουσος. *Suid.*

ally of *Devotion*: Moſt men *will* not *pray* till they *muſt*, it is *miſery*, which like *Jonahs fiſh*, puts them upon humble *ſupplication*, who never *thought* of *God* under the *gourd* of *Proſperity*. In which reſpect, that *Latine Proverb* was not taken up without juſt cauſe, *Qui neſcit orare, diſcat navigare*; he that knoweth not how to *pray*, let him turne *Mariner*: and no doubt thoſe violent *ſtormes*, which make the *Seas* to *roare*, will teach *him* to *pray*. When thoſe young *Perſian* gallants being beaten and purſued by their *enemies*, came to the River *Strymon*, which was ſo *frozen* that their *Boats* could not *launch*, and yet it began to *thaw*, ſo that they feared the *Ice* would not beare them, then (though the day before they *reviled* both *God* and his *providence*) moſt *timorouſly* they fall upon their *faces*, and *ardently beg* of *God* that the *River* might *beare* them over from their enemyes purſuit. The ſmart *laſhes* of Gods *rod* drive them home, and draw them *neare* to *him*, who before were *farre* from *him*.

Dr. *Jer. Tay.* Sermon.

τί ἐστιν ἐκ βαθέων ἂν ἁπλῶς φήσιν ἀπὸ στόματος, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ καρδίας, ἰσθυται γὰρ αἱ τῶν θλιβομένων ψυχαὶ καὶ εὐχαί. *Chryſo. in Pſal.* 129.

κάμνουσα ψυχὴ ἔσχυσε θεῷ. Greg. Naz. Orat. 17.

The *Greekes* aptly expreſſe the *declining* eſtate of a *Kingdome* by πεσεῖν εἰς γόνυ *falling* upon the *Knee*, and its *ruined* eſtate by πεσεῖν εἰς στόμα falling upon the *Mouth*; expreſſions, which though they principally referre to the *condition*, yet withall intimate the *diſpoſition* of men in an *afflicted* condition, they whoſe *knees* in health were like *Elephants*, without *joynts*, could not, or rather would not bend, in *ſickneſſe* fall upon their *knees*, nay, when *nigh to death*, fall upon their *mouthes* in humble *adoration* and earneſt *invocation* upon *God*. And for theſe cauſes, that men may both looke *forward* to their *end*, and *upward* to their *God*; he is pleaſed to bring them *downeward*, almoſt to the *Gates of Death*, and *Chambers* of the *Grave*.

To end this, let us all make *account* of, and *prepare* for *ſtraights*. In *health*, expect *ſickneſſe*, in *ſickneſſe* looke for *death*, or to be brought *nigh to it*. *Diſeaſes* may come *unſent* for, let them not come *unlook'd* for; if they happen not, thou art not the *worſe*, and it is *labour well loſt*; if they *doe*, thou art the *better* fitted, and it is *time well ſpent*. Doe not *flatter* thy ſelfe in *health*, as if the *mountaine* of thy body were *ſo ſtrong that it could not be moved*: Alas, one *blaſt* from *heaven* cannot

not onely *move*, but *remove*, *ſhake*, but *overturne* it, rather even then when thou art *fed* with fat *paſtures*, cleare *waters*, thy *Table* ſpread, thy *Cup* full, thy *Body* hayle, often thinke of *walking through the valley of the ſhadow of death*: *Happy* is that man, whom when *ſickneſſe* arreſteth, and *death* approacheth to, can ſay, and ſay it truly, *This is no more then what I have looked and provided for all my dayes.* And ſo much be ſpoken of the ſecond particular, paſs we now to the third. Pſal. 23. 4.

3. *Eminency* of the *perſon*, whom this extreame *diſeaſe* befell in the relative *He*. If you would know *who* this *He* was, be pleaſed to caſt your eyes on the 25. *verſe* of the *Chapter*, where you finde his *name* to be *Epaphroditus*, one that was not onely a *good* Man, but a *Man* of *God*, not onely a *Servant*, but a *Miniſter* of *Chriſt*, and one ſo *eminent*, as that Saint *Paul* dignifies him with the *titles* of his *Brother*, and *Companion*, and *fellow-Souldier*; and yet of him it is here ſaid that *he was nigh unto death*. Ver. 25. Ibid.

Saints as well as *ſinners*, *Miniſters* as well as the *People*, are *liable* to deſperate *diſeaſes*. In reſpect of *temporall* evills they have no more *priviledge* than *others*: And no wonder, ſince

1. That which is the *cauſe* both of *ſickneſſe* and *death*, remaineth in them, to wit, *ſinne*: Indeed the *power* of *ſinne* is weakened, therefore they cannot be *hurt of the ſecond death*, but the *being* of it remaineth, and that neceſſitateth the *firſt*; they are ſo freed from the *guilt* of it, that they ſhall not *taſte* the *torments* of *hell*, but yet they may *drinke deepe* of the *miſeries* of this *life*: *ſinne* will not leave the *beſt* man till it hath *brought* him to his *grave*, well may it bring him to his *ſick* bed. *Peccatum ſeparans inter nos & Deum penitus auferri non poteſt, donec liberemur a corpore.* Bern. de 3. in adv. Serm. 6.

2. In reſpect of their *bodily conſtitution*, they are *earthly houſes*, that will *moulder* away, till at laſt they *fall*: *earthen veſſels* ſubject to *flawes* and *cracks*, till at length they *breake*. The *Saints* are the *Sonnes of God* by *grace*, but ſtill the *Sonnes of Adam* by *nature*, the *Miniſters* are *Angels* in reſpect of their *office*, but ſtill they are *Men* in regard of their *perſons*, and being of the ſame *mould*, and ſubject to the ſame *dangers* with *others*.

3. More ſpecially, the very *calling* and *employment* of *Miniſters* is ſuch, as *exhauſteth* their *ſpirits*, *weakeneth* their *bodyes*, and *acceleurateth* both *diſeaſes* and *death*: our *Apoſtle* ſaith of *Epaphrodit.* that for the *work of Chriſt he was nigh to death*; v. 30. the *worke* he there meaneth is moſt *probably* conceived to be the *travelling* of this good man to *Rome*, with ſupplyes for *his* wants, (to *relieve* a *Chriſtian*, eſpecially a *Meſſenger* of *Chriſt*, is the *work of Chriſt*) but it is no leſſe true of the *worke of Chriſt*, which is *peculiarly* the *Miniſters*, ſince the *pains* they take in *preaching*, oft times Chriſt brings them *nigh to death*. It was ſaid of *Archimedes ſtudiis quibus obtinuit famam amiſit vitam*, *the ſtudies which got him credit loſt his life*; and it may be ſaid of many *Miniſters*, the *faſtings*, *watchings*, *labours preachings*, by which they *profit* the peoples *ſoules*, *hurt* their *bodyes*. Thus like the *candle* they *waſte* themſelves that they might *enlighthen*, yea, like the *ſalt* they *diſſolve* themſelves that they may *ſeaſon* others.

4. Finally, *God* hath choice and ſingular *ends* at which he aimeth, when he bringeth his owne Servants or Miniſters into ſuch *deſperate ſickneſſes*, and that both, in regard of *ſinne* and *grace*.

1. In regard of their *ſinnes*, that they may be either *purged* or *prevented*, by which means their *ſickneſſe* becomes their *Phyſicke*, and the *Malady* it ſelfe a ſpirituall *remedy*. It may be they have *fallen* into ſome *groſſe ſinne*, and therefore they *fall* into ſome *grievous ſickneſſe*: So was it with thoſe *unworthy* Communicants, concerning whom Saint *Paul* ſaith, *for which cauſe many of them were weake, many ſick, and ſome ſlept*. It may be God ſeeth them *prone* to *commit* ſome *hainous fault* which he *reſtraineth* them from by ſome *dolorous ſickneſſe*, as S. *Paul* had a *prick in his fleſh* that he might not be *puffed up* in his *minde*. ſo *God* ſometimes *wounds* his Servants *bodyes*, as knowing, that otherwiſe they would have *wounded* their *conſciences*.

2. In reſpect of their *graces*, that the *truth* of them may be *tried*, the *acts* of them *renewed*, and the *ſtrength* of them *encreaſed*. *God* hath *many* wayes to *try* men, among which *ſickneſſe*, eſpecially if *dangerous*, is a ſore *tryall*, and therefore whe-

εἰ δ' ὁ δεχόμενος τὰς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ δέχεται τὸν χείσονα, κὴ ὅ ἀσθενοῦντων ἐν τίνι τοῖς μαθηταῖς χεισῶ ὑπηρετεῖ. *Oecumen. ib.*

Cauſa morbi Juit nimia diligentia in me curando, in docendo evangelio, in defendenda mea cauſa, in vigiliis, jejuniis, lucubrationibus, &c. Aret. ibid.

τί θαύμασον εἰ κακοπαθοῦσι καὶ ἅγιοι, εἴτε εἰς καθαρσιν, εἴτε εἰς ἔλεγχον ἀρετῆς κὴ πείραν φιλοσοφίας. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 19.

1 Cor. 11. 30

2 Cor. 12. 7.

ὅτε ἀγαθός τις ὢν χρεὶς ἁμαρτίας, ὅτε κακός τις χρεὶς δικαιοσύνης, ἀ λοτέρεις δὲ ἀ-

when the *Devill*, by *Gods* leave had tryed *Job* in the losse of his *Cattell*, *Servants*, and *Children*, he obtaineth *licence* to inflict *sores* upon his *body*, making this his *last* (as accounting it his *fiercest*) onset. Indeed then is the *triall* of a mans *faith*, when *God* seemeth as if he would *slay* him, of his *hope* when all things are *desperate*, of his *love* when *God* frowneth upon, nay *beateth* him, of his *patience* when the *paine* is *sharp*, of his *courage* when the *sorrowes of death compasse him*, of his *perseverance*, when he *holds fast his integrity* to the *death*.

μόιβη καὶ ἀνδύσεις ἰων ἤ τις δὲ καλὸς καὶ φάυλον ἐργάσηται τι καὶ νοσήσῃ μὴ δαιμονήσῃς. Chrys. T. 7. de Morb. & Med.

To *close up this*, let it be a lesson of *comfort*, of *charity*, and of *diligence*.

Quosdam pios Deus peccare posse, in salutem sigillat cos infirmitate corporis, ne peccent: ut eis utilius sit frangi languoribus ad salutem, quam remanere in olumnes ad damnationem. Bern. de Int. Dom. cap. 46.

1. Of *comfort*, when any *sickneſſe* seizeth on thee, remember *whose lot* it hath been as well as *thine*, and be not discouraged. When *Christ* would encourage his *Disciples* against *sufferings*, he useth this argument, *for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you*: Mat. 5. 11. it is that *meditation* which may *revive* us when we are in pain and misery, *so it fared with others of Gods faithfull ones before me*. That *argument* of *Eliah* indeed was somewhat *passionate*, 1 King. 19. 4. *It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my Fathers*; but it is a *pious* reasoning for every *Christian* to say, *I am content Lord, if thou take away my health, exercise me with diseases, I am not better than* Job, David, Hezekiah, Epaphroditus, *and others of thy faithfull Servants and Ministers; who am I, that I should think much to pledge those holy men of God, though in a bitter Cup?*

Probationes diversæ sunt tredentium, alius per ægritudinem, alius amissione charorum, alius per damnum pecuniæ probatur. Ambr. in Loc.

2. Of *Charity*, and that both to thy *selfe* and *others*.

1. *Condemne* not thy *selfe* as if *God hated* thee, because he *corrects* thee, or as if he were *more angry* with thee than *others*, because he *chastiseth* thee *more severely* then *them*. Indeed it is *good* in a *time* of *sickneſſe* to *reflect* upon thy *selfe*, examine thy wayes, and if *conscience accuse* of some great misdemeanour, to *humble* thy selfe, and *acknowledge* thy *disease* the *just reward* of thy *offence*, but otherwise, do not *conclude* thy owne guilt or *Gods hatred* meerely from the *premisses* of *sickneſſe*, though *virulent*.

ὅταν ἀῤῥωστία πειρατήσῃς ἄνθρωπε ἀναμνήσθητι τῶ σώματος τῶ Ἰωβ, καὶ τῆς ἁγίας ἐκείνης σαρκός. Chrys. T. 7. de Morb. & Med.

2. *Censure* not *others* as if they were therefore the *worst* of sinners, because in their bodyes the *greatest* sufferers. This is *(indeed)*

(*indeed*) that *hard measure* which *Gods people* and *Miniſters* often *meet* with: When the *Barbarians* ſaw a *Viper* upon *Paul's hand*, they preſently condemned him as a *murtherer*; and *David* complaineth of his *enemies*, that when he was *ſick*, *they ſpake miſchievous things againſt him*: nay *Job's friends* (though good men) were deceived with this *fallacy*, and accuſe *Job* of *hypocriſie* becauſe of his *calamity*. And *thus* it is ſtill, If a zealous *Chriſtian*, or faithfull *Miniſter* be *viſited* with a dolefull *ſickneſſe*, his *Religion* muſt be no better than *Diſſimulation*, and his *Doctrine Hereſie*: But ſurely it is either *Ignorance*, or *Malice*, or *both*, that filleth mens mouthes with ſuch cenſures.

Act. 28. 4.
Pſal. 38. 13.
Quàm præpoſterum judicium eorum qui ex variis malis quibus nonnulli magni viri & doctores eccleſiæ laborare nonnunquam ſolent, ſiniſtre de illorum doctrina & ſalute judicare. Zanch in Loc.

It is true, there never was *ſickneſſe without ſinne*, but the *ſickneſſe* is not alwayes *proportioned* to the *ſinne*: *theſe things come alike to all*, was the *wiſe mans* Obſervation, nor doth *any ſickneſſe* befall *any man* which may not befall the *beſt* man. I know ſome aſſert a *Saint* to be *Plague-free*, grounding it upon the *Promiſe* in the *Pſalme*, that *no plague ſhall come nigh his dwelling*: But you muſt know, this is onely a *temporall* Promiſe, and therefore (as indeed *all ſuch*) hath a *double* condition annexed unto it. The one *ex parte perſonæ*, on the *Saints* part, which is to *make the Lord, even the moſt high, his habitation*; if then *good* men, in *peſtilentiall* times, through a diſtruſtfull *feare*, make the *Creatures* their *refuge*, no mervaile if the *plague* infect *them* and their *dwellings*. The other *ex parte rei*, in regard of *the thing* it ſelfe, which is onely *aſſured* ſo far as it may make for *Gods glory* and his *Peoples benefit*. We read in the former part of the tenth verſe *there ſhall no evill befall him*, whereby is intimated that the *plague* ſhall not then *come nigh to*, when it is *evill* for a *good* man, but if at any time *God* ſee it *good*, either for the *manifeſtation* of his *owne glory* (to wit, of his *juſtice* in ſo ſeverely *puniſhing* his owne, of his *power* and *mercy* in *delivering* from ſo deadly a *diſeaſe*) or for the ſpirituall *advantage* of his *people* (in *humbling* them for ſome *ſcandalous ſinne* by ſo *ſmart a chaſtiſement*, in *exerciſing* the *ſtrength* of their *patience* by ſo *ſore* a *tryall*) *not* the *holieſt* perſon is in ſuch caſes *exempted* from the *plague*, nor is it *improbably* conceived that *Job's* botches, *Hezekiah's*

Ver. 9.

boyles.

boyles, *Davids* sores were not much *different* from, if not altogether the *same* with the *plague*, who yet *all* of them were *choice* and eminent Saints. Oh then, let us take heed how we lay the *load* of heavy *censure* upon the *backs* of *Gods Ministers* and *Servants*.

3. Of *diligence*, that

1. *We* who are *Ministers*, *improve* the time of our *health* in *feeding the flocks of Christ*, since when *sickness* cometh, we shall be *disenabled* from our employments: nay perhaps we that have *taught others*, may then have need to *learne our selves*.

You who are the *People*, *get* all the *good* you can from us, whilest we are in a *capacity* of *doing* good to you, ere long the *Candle* of our *lives* may burne *dimme* by reason of some *sickness*, yea, be *blowne* out by *death*, and then we can *no longer* give *light* unto you. Oh therefore *walke in the light* while you have it, be *willing* to *learne* while we are *able* to *teach*, account our labours *precious*, and let them be *profitable* to you, whilest God maketh us *able* to bestow them among you, which we shall not be, when that *befalls* us which did *Epaphroditus* in the Text, to be *sick nigh unto death*: And so I have given a *dispatch* to the *first generall*, namely the *distresse*: I now proceed to

2. The *deliverance*, and therein the Gen. part.

1. *Efficiency* of the *Author*, *God*. Indeed both *life* and *death*, *health* and *sickness*, are in *Gods hand*: That of the *Poet*,

Una eademq; manus vulnus opemq; tulit, *Ovid.*

may in this respect be fitly made use of; the *same hand* of Divine Providence is that which *maketh* and *closeth* the *wound*: *He killeth, and maketh alive, he bringeth downe to the grave, and bringeth up*, so singeth *Hannah*. 1 Sam. 2. 6: *I forme light, and create darkenesse, I make peace, and create evil, I the Lord doe all these things*, is *Gods* owne *saying* by the *Prophet*. Thy *head* cannot *ake* without his *leave*, nor leave *aking* without his *help*; but though *both* are from him, yet with some *difference*. Of *sickness*, he is onely the *efficient*, *sinne* is the *meritorious* cause. Of *health* he is so the *efficient*, as that his *mercy* is the *impulsive* cause, for which reason perhaps it is here said, *God had mercy*; that Isa. 45. 7.

which

which *moveth him* is his *pitty*, and that which *helpeth us* is his *power*.

Sunt aliqua media divinæ providentiæ, non propter defectum suæ virtutis, sed propter abundantiam suæ bonitatis, ut dignitatem causalitatis etiam creaturis communicet. Aquin. part 1. q. 10. art 3.

True it is, *God* is for the moſt part pleaſed to make *uſe* of *meanes* in effecting *health*, but this ariſeth from the *greatneſſe of his goodneſſe*, *not any defect in his Almightineſſe*, as *Aquinas* pithily.

Luk. 4. 38. 7. 10. John 5. 8, 9. 2 Kings 5. 14. Iſa. 38. 21. Iohn 9. 6.

That he *needeth not* meanes, appeareth in as much as he ſometimes worketh *without* any. Such were the *Cures Chriſt* wrought upon *Peters Wives Mother*, the *Centurions Servant*, and the *Impotent Cripple*, whom his *Word* onely reſtored to health. Nay many times the meanes he uſeth are *improbable*, yea, of their owne nature apt to produce a *contrary* effect. What vertue could there be in the *waters of Jordan* to cleanſe *Naamans leproſie?* or in the *lump of figgs* to heale *Hezekiah's ſores?* yea, the *Spittle* and *Clay* which *Chriſt* made uſe of, were more *likely to* put *out* a *ſeeing*, than *recover* a *blinde* mans *eyes*.

He ſtandeth *not* in *need* of *meanes*; but the moſt *probable* meanes ſtand *in need* of *him*. It is to put *honour* on the *creature* that God vouchſafeth to uſe it as an *inſtrument*, and when the *creature* becometh an *inſtrument* of any *good*, it is onely as in the *hand* of *God*, working with, and by it. For, tell me, when any are *recovered*, who is it that put the *medicinall* quality into the *drugs* which heale them, but the *God of Nature?* who giveth that *wit* and *skill* to man which *findeth* out their *qualityes*, and accordingly maketh *uſe* of them, but the *God of Knowledge?* Finally, who is it that commands a *bleſſing* upon, and giveth *ſucceſſe* to the *meanes*, but the *God of Power?*

Mat. 4. 4.

Man liveth not by bread onely, nor is the Patient cured by *Phyſick onely*, or *chiefly*, it is a *word proceeding from the mouth of God* that maketh the *one* effectuall for *continuation*, and the *other* for *reſtauration* of *health*.

To *apply* this in a three-fold admonition:

1. Art thou *wicked?* As thou deſireſt *health* to be *preſerved*, or *renewed*, make thy *peace* with *God* by *repentance*: it is the ground upon which the *Jewiſh* Converts mutually exhort each other to this duty, *Come let us returne unto the Lord, for he hath torne, and he will heale us, he hath ſmitten, and he will binde*

Hoſ. 6. 1.

binde us up, though it be that indeed, which *God* out of his *Philanthropie* sometimes vouchsafeth, yet it is a fond *presumption* for any to expect that he should be a *Physitian* to *them* who are *enemies* to *him*. Me thinks an *ungodly* wretch should imagine that *God* speaketh to him in the *words* of the *Prophet*, *when thou cryest let thy companions deliver thee*; or, as he saith to the *children of Israel*, when they committed Idolatry, *Goe and cry unto the Gods which you have chosen*, the lusts which you have served, *let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation*. Had that *accusation* of *Rabshakeh* been true, his *argumentation* was *solid*, when he sent that *message* to *Hezekiah*, *But if thou say to me, we trust in the Lord our God, is it not hee, whose high Places, and whose Altars* Hezekiah *hath taken away?* And surely the *conscience* of a *wicked* man (if not *seared*) cannot but *check* him in the like expressions, *Wilt thou say I trust in God for health, or recovery? Is it not he whose Name thou hast blasphemed, Patience thou hast abused, and Worship thou hast neglected?* Be *wise* therefore, oh ye *sinners*, and *instructed* ye *wicked of the earth!* make him your *friend* who must be your *refuge*, *offer the sacrifice of righteousnesse*, and then, not till then, *put your trust in the Lord*. Your *life*, your *health* is in *his hands*; looke that your *doings* be *right*, and then your *persons* shall bee *precious* in his *eyes*.

2. Art thou *sick?* learne whom to *invocate*, and on whom to *depend* for *health*, upon no other than *God*.

Far be it from any of us in *sicknesse* (with *Saul* in *danger*) to *run* to the *Pythomise*, and *seek help* of the *Devill*. *Satan's* best *cures* are deadly *wounds*; it is far *better* to *continue sick*, then by *such* meanes to *get health*. Since whilst thy mortall *body* is for a time *restored*, thy immortall *soule* is desperately *endangered*.

Nor yet let us with the *Papists seeke* to any *Saints* as *Mediatours* with *God* for our *recovery*. Whilest They have their *severall Saints* for *severall Diseases*; *Sebastian* for the *Plague*, *Anthony* for the *Gangreen*, *Patronilla* for *Agues*, and *Benedict* for the *Stone*: Let us have *recourse* to the *one God* in *all Diseases*. Whilst they thinke it too great *saucinesse* to

Creatorem nobis propitium reddamus, qui potens est nos tum morbis affligere, tum sanare. Ephr. de virginit. T. 1. Ita 57.13 Iu'ges 10.14. Isa. 36.7.

τοῦτο δὲ ἦν μικρὰ ἀρετὴ τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῷ θαρρεῖν, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πεποιθέναι μετὰ δὲ τῆς δικαιοσύνης. *Chrys.* in *Psal.* 4.6.

βέλτιον ἐν ταῖς ἀῤῥωστίαις μένειν ἢ διὰ τὴν ἀπαλλαγὴν τῆς ἀσθενείας εἰς ἀσεβείαν καταπεσεῖν κἂν γὰρ θεραπεύσῃ γένηται μείζων κατὰβλαψην ἢ ὠφέλησην. *Chrys.* T. 7. *de Morb. & Med.*

be their owne *ſpokes-men* to *God*; and therefore go to *ſaints ſomebody* to preferre their Petitions for them: let us hold it the beſt *manners* to go our *ſelves* of our *owne* errands to *God*, not doubting but that he, who bids us *come*, will bid us *welcome*.

2 Chron. 16 12. Finally, let us not tread in *Aſa*'s foot-ſteps, who *ſought not to the Lord, but to the Phyſitians*; nor yet let us tread *Antipodes* to him in *ſeeking to the Lord, and not to the Phyſitians*, whileſt he *affoards* them: but as *Gideon* commanded his *Souldiers* to cry, *the ſword of the Lord, and of Gideon*; ſo let us ever *ſay, the bleſſing of the Lord, and the skill of the Phyſitian.* Indeed where *opportunity* is vouchſafed, thoſe *two* muſt *not* be *ſevered. God* will not *uſually* help *without meanes*, and therefore they muſt be *uſed*; the meanes cannot *poſſibly* help *without God*; and therefore in the *uſe* of them his *bleſſing* muſt be *implored*. They are *equally* bad to *neglect* and to *reſt* on ſecond cauſes, to expect ſuccour either *from* them *originally*, or *without* them *inſtrumentally*, to rely on *God without meanes*, or truſt to *meanes without God*. Surely, what the *King* ſaid to

2 Kings. 6 27. the *woman, if the Lord doe not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee?* that all *creatures* ſay to us in any *diſtreſſe*, *If the Lord help not, whence ſhall we? except the Lord build the houſe, they labour in vaine that build it, except the Lord keep the City, the watchman watcheth but in vain*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. Indeed he doth not ſay *quia, becauſe the Lord buildes the houſe*, but *niſi*, as excluding *humane* diligence: but *except the Lord build*, thereby including *divine* providence: nor doth he onely ſay, *niſi dominus conſenſerit, adjuverit*, but *niſi ædificaverit, cuſtodierit, unleſſe the Lord conſent*, (a word which *onely* implyeth his *will*) or *unleſſe the Lord help*, which *extendeth* to *any* kinde of *aſſiſtance* (the *meaneſt* thing that concurreth to any work, being *cauſa adjuvans*, an *auxiliary* cauſe) but *unleſſe the Lord build and keep*, which imply the *concurrence* of his *power*, as well as *will*, and that as the *principall* agent in the *building* and *keeping*: the *ſame* aſſertion is *no leſſe true* in this *preſent* caſe, *except the Lord heale the patient, the Phyſitian adminiſtreth but in vaine. Heal thy ſelf*, is only true of *that Phyſitian*, to whom it was ſpoken: no other *Phyſitian* can of himſelf either

Pſal 127. 1. *Fruſtra iſti omnis humana diligentia niſi divina accedat providentia.* Muſc. ibid.

Id ibid.

Luke 4. 23.

either heale *himſelfe* or *others*. *Tangit te Rex, Sanat te Deus*, was no leſſe *truly* than *humbly* ſpoken when the *Royall* touch was given, *The King toucheth thee, God cureth thee.* It is ſo here, the *Phyſitian* preſcribes the *medicine*, but *God* by that commands *health*. Oh therefore that *Phyſitians* in *adminiſtring*, *patients* in *receiving*, would onely *depend* upon, and *ſue* for *divine* Benedi.ction, when the one *writes* a *recipe* with his *pen*, let him *pray* with his *heart*; when the other *receiveth* the *potion* into his *ſtomach*, let him *lift up his eyes* to *God*, who ſaith of himſelfe, *I am the Lord that healeth thee.* Exod. 15. 6.

3. Art thou *recovered?* know whom **to *praiſe***, and to whom to *aſcribe* the *cure:* could the *ingredients* of thy *medicine* ſpeak, each would ſay of *health*, as the *depths* and the *Seas*, of *wiſdome*, *It is not in me:* It is, I am ſure, the *voice* of all *pious Phyſitians*, *non nobis, not to us* (*oh man*) *not to us, but to God be the praiſe of thy recovery.* And therefore whilſt the *Atheiſt* looketh no further than *nature* and *art*, let the *Chriſtian* look higher at *God* and his *bleſſing*: and as he muſt not forget that *reſpect* which is *due* to the *Phyſitian*, as the *Inſtrument*, ſo let the *chiefeſt* honour be given to *God* as being the *principall* efficient. The truth is, for the moſt part, ſuch is our *fooliſhneſſe*, that whileſt we fix our *eyes* upon the *bleſſings* we receive, we turne our *backs* upon the *God* that beſtoweth them, and we are more ready to *father* them upon *any other* than *him*, who is the true *donor* of them. Oh let not onely *gratitude* but *juſtice*, teach us to give *God* his *due*, when we *gather* the *fruit* let us *caſt* downe our *eyes* on the *root* from which they ſprout, when we *feed* upon the *acornes*, let us *lift* them up to the *tree* from whence they fall, and being *refreſhed* by the flowing *ſtreame*, let us *reflect* upon the ſpringing *fountaine*. *Oh my God, it is in thee that I live, let me live to thee; from thee I have received health, to thee I returne praiſe; I have the comfort, take thou the glory of thy great mercy.* And ſo I paſſe forward to the Iob 28. 14. Peter 5. 1. *Faciem quodammodo ponentes ad ea quæ fecit, dorſum ponimus ad artificem qui fecit.* *Si quando nobis præſtiti aliquid præter ſpem noſtram & meritum deus tribuit, alius aſcribis hoc fortunæ, alius evenui, alius conſilio, nullius deo.* Salv. de Cub. l. 7.

2. *Excellency* of the *Benefit*, how expreſſed, in thoſe words, *Had mercy on him.*

In *mercy* there are *two* things conſiderable, *affectus*, and *effectus*, the *paſſion*, and the *action*, the inward *pitty*, and the out-

owtward *bounty*, that is in the *heart*, this in the *hand*; that the *bowels* of mercy, this the *works* of mercy; that called by the *Greekes* ἔλεος, and this ἐλεήμοσυνη, and *both* theſe, though not in the *ſame* ſenſe, are *attributed* to *God*, and here to be *underſtood*.

Miſericordia nonnullis quoſ mi erum cor facit. Aug contra adv. leg. l. 1. c. 20. *Miſericors dicitur aliquis ſi qua miſerum cor habens.* Aquin par. prim q. 21. art. 3. Iſa. 63. 6. Item 31. 20. Pſal. 103. 16. *Nobis non ſibi loquitur, atque ideo noſtris utitur in loquendo.* Hilar. in Pſ 126 μέγα ἀ τυγ- ῶντι σάγμα κον ἔλεος Καὶ τὸ συναλγεῖν γνησίως πο- λύ τι κοῤίζει τῆς σύμπο- θους. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16. *Miſericordia iſta alterius miſeriæ in cor noſtro compaſſio quibuſ- libet (ſi poſſimus) jubentibus compellimur.* Aug. de civit. dei. l. 9. c. 8.

1. In *mercy* there is a *laying* of anothers *miſery* to *heart*, The *Greeke* word ἐλεία is derived from the *Hebrew* רחם which ſignifieth *Ejulare*, *plangere*, to *bewaile* and *lament*: a *condolency* with our Brothers *calamity*, being a choice *ingredient* of *mercy*. This is that which the *Holy Ghoſt* aſſerteth of *Gods* Scripture, where it is ſaid, *in all their afflictions he was afflicted*: And againe, *My bowels are troubled*: And againe, *Like as a Father pittyeth his Children, ſo the Lord pittyeth them that feare him*: But withall, we muſt know, that in theſe *Phraſes* the *moſt high* is pleaſed to *condeſcend*, and ſpeaking *to men*, to ſpeak of himſelfe, *as if* he were *a man*. There is not then any ſorrow or *compaſſion* in him who is *impaſſible*, but by this is repreſented his *good will* towards his people, whereby he is *propenſe* to ſuccour them. And becauſe the *afflicted* perſon findes oft times much *eaſe* and ſolace in that *ſympathie*, which another expreſſeth towards him, that we may know the *like* ſolace is to be found in *God*, this *compaſſion* is *attributed* to *God*; and indeed is, though not *formally*, yet *æquivalently*, nay *eminently* verified of him. To bring this home, in that *God* is ſaid to *have mercy* on dying *Epaphroditus*, it implyeth thus much, that *God beholding* and taking *notice of*, was as it were *affected* with his imminent *danger*, having after a ſort a *friendly* pitty, and *motherly* yearning, or rather a *fatherly* good-will towards *him*. But this is not all that *mercy* includeth, and therefore know,

2. In *mercy* there is an *indeavour* to *relieve* him whoſe *miſery* it *condoleth*, as ſhe *ſuffereth with*, ſo ſhe *doth for*, and (according to her *ability*) either *helpeth* him to *beare* the *burden* by *putting* under her *ſhoulder*, or wholly *eaſeth* him of it by *removing* it from his *ſhoulder*. Hence the definition of mercy is well given to be *ſuch a compaſſion of anothers miſery, as puts upon a cheerfull imploying our power for the ſuſtaining him under, and delivering him out of it*. This is that which in

in a *proper* and genuine ſenſe agreeth to *God*, whoſe *property* is to *deliver his* out of their *afflictions*, and *preſerve* them from *deſtruction*: and this no doubt, is that which our *Apoſtle* here eſpecially *intends* in this expreſſion, *God had mercy on him*, that is, he did *remove* his *miſery*, and *prevent* his *death* by *curing* him of that *ſickneſſe* which had brought him *nigh* to it.

Triſtari de miſeriâ alterius non competit Deo, ſed repulſare miſeriam alterius hoc maximè ei competit. Aquin. par. prim. qu. 21. a. 3.

Let the ſame minde be in us that is in *God*: when our brethren are under *ſickneſſe*, or any other *diſtreſſe*, to *have mercy on them*. It was our bleſſed *Saviours* reaſoning with the *Phariſees*, though not altogether to the ſame purpoſe, *Which of you ſhall have an Aſſe or an Ox fall into the pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out?* Surely *one man* is of more worth then *many Aſſes*; and ſhall we not, in what we may, *ſuccour* him when fallen into ſome grievous *ſickneſſe*?

Nomen miſericordiæ pro opere. Zanch. in loc. *Dicitur miſericordia, quod miſeriæ ejuſdam eſt Remotio,* Eſt. ibid.

That good *Samaritan* in the *Type* is no other than *Chriſt* in the *Truth*, who pityed and *healed man* when dangerouſly *wounded* by *ſinne*, and as it was the *deſigne* of his *death* to cure mankinde of his *ſpirituall* ſickneſſe, ſo his *practiſe* in the courſe of his life to *go about doing good and healing*. If we call our ſelves *Chriſtians*, whom ſhould we *imitate* but *Chriſt*, by performing all *offices* of love to the *ſick*, which lye within our Spheare? and if we have no *oyle* but that of *compaſſion*, no *wine* but *teares* and *prayers*, let them be *poured* into the wounds and *diſeaſes* of thy *neighbour*; ſo ſhall we bee *Diſciples of Chriſt*. But the *Text* leads us yet one *ſtep* higher from *Chriſt*, as *man*, and as *God-man*, to *Chriſt* as *God*, acquainting us with *Gods mercy* to a *ſick* man: and what more befitting *man* then to *imitate God* by practiſing this *God-like* worke of mercy. *μέγα καὶ τίμιον ἀνὴρ ἐλεήμων, a mercyfull man*

οὐκ ἔστιν ἀτιμώτερος σὸι τᾶ κτήνως ὃ ἄνθρωπ☉ ὢ ἄνθρωπε. &c. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

ἄνθρωπ☉ ὃ ἀλαμ ἰερυσαλὴμ ὃ παράδεισ☉, ἰεριχὼ ὃ κόσμ☉ λῃσαι ὃι ποννηρὸι λόγισμοι κ᾽ ἢ πλάθασι, ταμαείτης ὃ χεί'ς☉. Athanaſ. qu. 15. de parab.

ὃς ἀντὶ μεγάλα πεσθυμίαν ἔι μηδὲν ἔχης δάκρυσον. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

A Chriſto dicti eſtis Chriſtiani; nam eâ viâ quâ Chriſtus ambularet, & vos debetis ambulare. Bern. Serm. ad paſt. Pr. 20. 6. Sept. *Vere Magnus qui Divinis ſcriptis interpres eſt ut imitatur* Amb. in Pſ. 118.

τὶ ἄλλον χ᾽ ἔχὶ θεὸν σε πεσκαλεῖται γενέσθαι ὃ λόγ☉, οἱονεὶ μορφωθέντα τῶ τᾶς θεότητ☉ ἰδιώμαλι. Greg. Nyſ. de Beat. Or. 5. γενᾶ τῶ ἀτυχῆντι θέ☉ ἢ ἔλεον θεᾶ μιμησάμεν☉. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

man is great and honourable, and that for this reaſon chiefly, becauſe he is *like* to *God*, in which reſpect *Gregory Nyſſen*, and *Nazianzen* call ſuch a *man* a *God*, as having *ſtampt* upon him the *Character* of a *Deity*. *Bee yee therefore followers of God as deare Children*, is Saint *Paul's* counſell in *generall*, *Be you mercifull, as your Father alſo is mercifull*, ſo our bleſſed *Saviour* adviſeth in *ſpeciall*: and yet more *particularly*, as *God had mercy on ſick* Epaphroditus, ſo let *us* on our *ſick* neighbour, by *viſiting* him, (if we can by our *skill* or *counſell* doe him good) however by *compaſſionating* him, and *interceding* with *God* in his behalfe.

Eph. 6. 1.
Luke 6. 36
Nihil dignius quam ut homo ſit autoris ſui imitator, & ſecundum modum propriæ facultatis divini ſit operis executor.
Leo de quadr. Serm. 5.
Pſal. 41. 3
Proſpicit pauperi, ægro ægroto, attenuato.
Vatabl ibid.
Improbus petitor, qui quod alius negat ſibi poſtulat. Homo eſto tibi miſericordiæ forma, ſis quomodo vis, quantum vis, quam cito vis miſericordiæ tibi fieri, tam cito alii, tantum, taliter ipſe miſerere.
Chryſol. Serm. 43.
Mat. 15. 7.
Vita mari eſt ſimilis, namque ut mare vita procellas: Hæc habet & ventos naufragiumque frequens.
Anth ſacr.

And becauſe this *duty* is that which (though ſo *honourable*) we are *averſe* from; give me leave to carry it a little further, & let you ſee it is *profitable*, as well as honourable. Not only that you may *follow God* in *mercy*, but that you may upon the like occaſion *obtain mercy* from *God*, *ſhew mercy* to others. It is a ſweet *promiſe* to feed on in a time of ſickneſſe. *The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſſe.* That *bed* muſt needs be *eaſie* which *God maketh*, nor can he *faint*, whom *God ſtrengtheneth*. but to whom is it made? *him* and *none* but him *who conſidereth the poore*, ſo our Tranſlation, but the *Hebrew* word דל may as well be rendered *ſick*, one that is *weakned* by a *diſeaſe*: he who *conſidereth others* in their *ſickneſſe*, ſhall be *ſupported* by *God* in *his*. Which of us, beloved, doth not *deſire* that *God* may ſhew that *mercy* to *us* in our *diſtreſſe*, which he did here to *Epaphroditus*? But how can we *expect God* ſhould *grant* that to *us*, which we *deny* to *others*? *Bleſſed are the mercifull*, ſaith *Chriſt*, *for they ſhall obtaine mercy*: Be then oh man to thy ſelfe, a *patterne* of mercy, and ſhew with that *ſpeed*, and in that *degree*, *mercy* to thy *ſick*, weak, languiſhing *neighbour*, which thou wouldſt have *God* vouchſafe to *thee* in the *like* condition. But a little more to *unbowell* this Clauſe.

The *mercy* here intended (as you have already heard) was the *prolongation* of *life*, and *reſtauration* of *health* to *Epaphroditus*: and here a double *queſtion* falls in to be reſolved,

How this can be called a mercy? And
If a mercy in it ſelfe, yet how a mercy to him?

Queſt.

Qu. 1. It is a plauſible *Objection* which is made, that *life* prolonged is *no* mercy, becauſe it is a calamitous *continuance* in an *evil* world: what is this *world* but a *Coffer* of *Sorrows*, *Labyrinth* of *Troubles*, *Schoole* of *Vanity*, *Market* of *Fraud*, *Theater* of *Tragedyes*, *Floud* of *Teares*, and *Map* of *Ruines*? And can it be a *favour* for a man to *continue* long in a *place* of *miſeries*? The *earth* we tread on, the *aire* we breath in, are as a *Sea*, wherein windes and *ſtormes* are ever blowing; and can it be a *favour* to be ſtill *toſſed* up and downe upon a *bluſtering* tempeſtuous Sea? Finally, this life is not a *life* but a *calamity*, yea, rather a *death* then a *life*, becauſe ſo *miſerable*: to *live long* is to be *long tormented*, and can this be a *mercy*?

ὑ βίος ἀληθῶς ὁ βίος, ἀλλα σύμφορα. *Philem.*

Tanta eſt tribulatio hujus miſeræ vitæ, ut nec vita ſit dicenda, ſed potius mors, vel quippiam aliud morte æternus. Idiot de pati. *Quid eſt diu vivere niſi diu torqueri.* Aug. de verb. dom. Serm. 17

Anſw. To all this it is *briefly*, but *fully* anſwered. That though there be many *evils* in the *world*, yet the *world* is not *evil*, nor is it *evil* to *abide* in the *world*. Theſe *miſeries* are only *accidental* to *life*, and ſo hinder not, but that *preſervation* from *death* is a *mercy*. And therefore the *Greek* Fathers upon this *Scripture* do hence moſt rationally *confute* the *Manichees*, who affirme the *world* in its owne nature to *be bad*, τι λέγεις ὦ αἱρέτικε ſo St. *Chryſoſtome*, ὦ μανιακὲ. So *Theophilact* in *particular*. *What ſayeſt thou to this, oh hereticall Manichee?* If the *world* be *wicked*, and the *life* which we now live in it, how doth the *Apoſtle* call this a *mercy* of *God*, that he *lengthened* Epaphroditus his dayes? The *other life* is *better* than this, ſurely then *this* muſt be *good*, an *immature death* is threatned, and inflicted as a *judgement*, ſurely then the *continuance* of *life* muſt be a *mercy*, as thoſe forementioned *Fathers excellently* argue,

Chryſoſt. } *in* Theoph. } Oecum. } *loc.*

καλὸν ἦ παρεῦσα ζωὴ αὐτὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν. *Theoph. ibid.*

Life is a mercy; and yet *health* is a *greater* mercy. Λῶιον ὑγιαίνειν was written upon the porch of *Apollo*'s Temple, *health* is the *Princeſſe* of *earthly bleſſings*: and *Plato* tells us that ἄμεινον ὑγιαίνειν was *ſung* by every one to his *Harpe* at the *Schooles*, and at *Feſtivals*. *Beauty*, *riches*, *health*, were the *three things Pythagoras* ſaid ſhould *chiefly* be *implored* of the *Gods*; but among them *health* the *chiefe*: indeed, it is that which maketh *life* it ſelfe to be a *mercy*, ſince *non eſt vivere ſed valere vita*, *To live is not ſo much to breath, as to be well.*

Ariſtot. Eth. l. 1. c. 8

Plat. in Gorg. Mart. Ep. 70. l. 6.

Mercies then they are (*eſpecially*) when *conjoyned*, and being ſo

Una eſt catena quæ nos alligatos tenet, amor vitæ qui ut non eſt abijciendus, ita mitigandus eſt. Sen. Ep. 27.

ſo in their owne *nature*, ought ſo to be *eſteemed* of by us: in which reſpect we ought to *pray* and *give thanks* for them as *bleſſings*. It is no leſſe a fault to *undervalue*, then to *overprize* our lives and health: this *latter* (I confeſſe) is the more *common*, but the *former* is no leſſe *culpable*: we muſt not be ſo much in *love* with *life* as to *dote* upon it, becauſe it is *ſhort*, yet we may ſo farre *love*, as to *deſire*, and endeavour that it *may*, yea, with the *Apoſtle* here, *account* it a *mercy*, when *it is prolonged*.

Corpus infra animam eſt & quævis anima vilis excellentiſſimo corpore excellentior invenitur. Aug in Pſ. 145.

I end this, If *deliverance* from *death* be a *mercy*, how *great* a mercy is *deliverance* from *hell?* If it be a *bleſſing* to have the *danger* of a *mortall diſeaſe prevented*, Oh what is it to have the *guilt* of our *deadly ſinnes pardoned?* Finally, if the *health* of the *body* be a *favour*, how *choice* a benefit is the *ſoules health?* Surely by how much *hell* is *worſe* then *death*, *ſin* then *ſickneſſe*, yea, by how much the *ſoule* is *better* than the *body*, by ſo much is the *one* to be *preferred* before the *other*. *Oh my ſoule, thou waſt ſick, deſperately ſick of ſinne, ſo ſick that thou waſt not only nigh to death, but dead in ſinnes, and treſpaſſes; but God had mercie on thee, he hath ſent his Sonne to heale, to revive thee, by being himſelfe wounded, nay, ſlain: and his ſpirit to cure, to quicken thee by killing thy ſinne, and renewing thy nature. Thou art indebted to thy God for temporall, much more for ſpirituall: Bleſſe the Lord, oh my ſoule, for thy life of nature, health of thy body; but let all that is within thee praiſe his holy name for thy life of grace, and eternall ſalvation.*

Chryſ. in loc. *Mori poſſit finem omnibus, malis in hac vita, dat terminum malis in hoc ſæculo, adimit omnem calamitatem.* Bern. de mod. viv. Serm 30.

Qu. 2. But it is further *inquired*, though this *recoverie* were a *mercy* in it *ſelfe*, yet how could it be ſo *to Epaphroditus* a godly man? Had it been deliverance *by death*, this were a mercy *indeed*; but deliverance *from death* ſeemeth rather an *injury* than a *courteſie*, πρὸς μὲν τὸν ἀιρέτικον ἔυκολον εἰπεῖν πρὸς δὲ τὸν χριστιανὸν τί ἐρεῖμεν, we may eaſily *refell* the *Heretick*, but how ſhall we *anſwer* the *Chriſtians* who *deſiring to be diſſolved* knoweth not how to *eſteeme* the *deferring* his diſſolution a *mercy?* Had *Epaphroditus* been a wicked man, it had been a *great* mercy to *ſpare* him, that he might *make* his *peace* with *God* by the practice of *faith* and *repentance*; but to *him*, whoſe *peace* was *alreadie* made, what *advantage* could the *prolonging*

longing of his *life* afford? *Death* it ſelfe to a *good* man is a *deliverance*, a *totall*, *finall* deliverance from all ſorrow and miſery for ever: And can that be a *deliverance*, which *keepeth off* our *deliverance? per Anguſta pervenitur ad auguſta*, This *red Sea* leads to *Canaan*; through the *valley* of *death* we paſſe to the *mount* of *glory*: And can that be a *mercy* which *retardeth* our *felicity?* Is it a courteſie for a man to be *detained* from his *wages*, and *held* to *labour?* to be *hindred* from *reſt*, and *called* to *worke?* to be *withheld* from his *country*, and *wander* in a *wilderneſſe?* Finally, to be *kept out* of a *Palace*, and *confined* to a *Priſon?* And yet, *all* this is *true* of a *godly* man, who when *nigh to death*, is called back againe to *live longer* in this *world*.

Moritur quidem juſtus ſed ſecure, quippe cujus mors in præſentiâ exitus eſt vitæ, ita introitus melioris. id. Ep. 109. Erit janua vitæ, initium refrigerii erit, ſanctæ illius mentis ſcala & ingreſſus in locum tabernaculi. Id. in ſerm.

Anſw. To *anſwer this*, though upon thoſe forementioned *conſiderations*, it *cannot* be denyed but that *death* is a *mercy* to a *Saint*; yet *thoſe* hinder not, but that in *other* reſpects the *continuance* of *life* is a *mercy*, even to a *godly* man. As for that κοινὴ συνήθεια, which the *Greek* Fathers ſpeak of, as if Saint *Pauls* language were more according to *cuſtome* than *truth*, and that when he calls *recovery* a *mercy*, he rather ſpeaketh as *men doe account*, than as *it is indeed*, it ſeemes to me ſomewhat *harſh*, that τὸ κερδᾶναι Ψυχὰς, the *opportunity* of *gaining* more *ſoules* to *God*, which this *preſervation* afforded him, is a farre more rationall *ſolution*. Upon this account it was Saint *Paul* looked upon the prolongation of his *owne life* as *needfull*: So he expreſſeth it in the former Chapter. And here, for the ſame reaſon, he calleth the *reſtauration* of *Epaphroditus* to health a *mercy*. To this purpoſe Saint *Hieromes note* upon the Text is very *appoſite*, *Miſertus eſt ejus ut majorem docendo colligat fructum*, *God had mercy on him*, that he, being a *Miniſter*, might by the *preaching* of the *Goſpel*, *gather* in more *ſoules*, and doe more good.

Chryſoſt. } *in* Theoph. } *loc*

Chriſoſt. ibid. ἔλεον λόγει τὴν ἐντᾶυθα ζωὴν· Καὶ φάμὴν ὅτι δὶ ἣν αἰτίαν ἄνω ἐπεν ἀναπαυσασθεῖσαν δὲ τὸ ἐπιμεῖναι ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ δι' ὑμᾶς. Oecu. in Loc. Phil. 1. 24. Hieron. in loc.

Obj. But you will *ſay*, this ſeemes not to be a full Anſwer: Indeed, had the *Apoſtle* ſaid, *but God had mercy on you*, namely the *Philippians*, this would be very *ſuitable*; the *recovery* of a faithfull *Miniſter* is, no doubt, a *mercy* to the *People*; but ſtill it remaineth a *doubt*, how the *Apoſtle* could ſay, as here he doth, *God had mercy on him*, to wit, *Epaphroditus*.

Repl. To which I *reply*, That the *opportunity* of this *ſervice* was not onely a *benefit* to the *Church*, but a *mercy* to *him*, in as much as by this meanes.

Conſiderandum eſt non eſſe parvam dignationẽ quum ſe Deus in nobis glorificat. Calv. in Io.

1. He became a *greater inſtrument* of *Gods glory*; It is an high *honour*, which *God* vouchſafeth to that man, whom he makes *uſe* of to *ſerve* and *honour* him; and to a *pious* ſoule *nothing* is *dearer* than *Gods glory*, deſiring rather to *glorify God* than to be *glorifyed with him*: this Saint *Paul* declares to his *hope*, yea, his *earneſt expectation*, that *Chriſt might be magnifyed in his body whether by life or death*. No wonder then, if conſidering how much *Epaphroditus* his *life* might *conduce* to *Gods glory*, he *reckoned* it as a *mercy*. Beſides,

Phil. 1. 20.

Qui Chriſto vivunt, falicitèr in ſpem gloriæ cœleſtis exercentur. Calv. ibid. Dan. 12. 2.

2. He *increaſed* his *owne reward*; the *longer* a *good man*, eſpecially a *goood Miniſter* liveth, the *more* ſinners he *converteth*, and *they that turne many to righteouſneſſe*, ſaith *Daniel*, *ſhall ſhine as the ſtarres for ever and ever*, nay, *every ſoule* that a faithfull *Miniſter winnes* to *God*, is as a new *gemme* added to that *Crown*, which ſhall one day be *put* upon his *head*.

Thus then the *caſe* ſtands; *Epaphroditus* indeed, by *dying*, had *received* his *reward*, but by *living* he *did* the more *ſervice*; by *dying* he had *obtained glory from God*, but by *living* he *brought glory to God*: and our bleſſed *Saviour* ſaith, *It is a more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*; by *dying* he had *enjoyed* his *recompence ſooner*, by *living* he *made* it *greater*, *that* would have *accelerated*, but *this augmented* it, ſo that even in reſpect of his *owne* future *happineſſe* he was no *loſer* but a *gainer* by the *prolonging* of his *life*, and therefore moſt juſtly doth Saint *Paul* ſay, *God had mercy on him*.

Act. 20. 35.

Briefly, and yet *clearely* to ſtate the whole matter.

Life and *death* may be *conſidered* and *compared* *foure* wayes,

1. In their formall *nature*, and ſo *death* is a *privation*, *life* a *poſition* of *good*; and therefore *death evil*, and *life good*,

2. In their *Cauſes*, *death* is a *fruit* of *ſin*, *life* an *effect* of *love*; our *wickedneſſe* deſerved the one, *Gods goodneſſe* conferreth the other; in which reſpect, *death* is *threatned* as a *puniſhment*, *life promiſed* as a *reward*.

3. In their naturall and proper *effects*, *death* bereaveth as well

well *godly*, as *wicked* men of the *ſociety* of *friends*, *poſſeſſion* of their *eſtates*, yea, all the *comforts* which this world affords, whereas by *life* we have the *fruition* of them continued to us, ſo that in this regard alſo, *life* is farre *better* than *death*, even to a *good* man.

4. Laſtly, in their accidentall *conſequents*, when a *wicked* man *dyeth* there followeth *torment*, but whileſt he *liveth* there is *hope* of his *repentance*, yea, many times it ſo falls out, ſome *come* into the *Vineyard* at the *eleaventh houre*, and to ſuch *life* is a *choice* mercy indeed: when a *godly* man *dyeth* he is *carried into Abrahams boſome*, *placed* in a ſtate of *bliſſe*; but by *living longer* he *honoureth God*, *edifieth* the *Church*, *worketh* out his *ſalvation*; he gaineth both the more time to *prepare* himſelfe for, get *aſſurance* of, yea, make an *addition* to his future glory, and therefore in *this* likewiſe, and ſo in *all* compariſons *life* hath the *preheminence*, and the continuance of it is juſtly called by the *Apoſtle* a *mercy*.

To cloſe up this, *life* continued, *health* reſtored, are *mercies*; oh let not us by *abuſing* them to *ſinne* turne them into *judgement*, who can *believe* it? and yet we may often *ſee* it, men change *bleſſings* into *curſes* by their iniquities, and as *Pariſienſis* excellently expreſſeth it, *Ipſa beneficia ſibi faciunt pœnalia & inſtrumenta contra ſeipſos divinæ juſtitiæ, They make benefits to become puniſhments, and the fruits of Gods mercy inſtruments of his juſtice.* The truth is, it was not ſo much *life* as the right *uſe*, Saint *Paul* conceived *Epaphroditus* would make of his life, which moved him to *call* it a *mercy*, *Multis periculo & peſtilens ſanitas fuit qui tutius ægrotaſſent*: Indeed theſe things are *good* or *evill* to us according as we *imploy* them. It had been a *greater* mercy to many *impenitent* ſinners that they had continued *ſick*, or *dyed*, then that they were *recovered*. Let us therefore *lay out* our *life*, our *health*, according to our ſeverall places, in *Gods* ſervice, ſo ſhall it prove *glory* to *God*, *benefit* to *others*, and a *mercy* to *us*: *Oh my ſoule, thou haſt received, as it were, a new life, improve it in new obedience; health is reſtored to thy body, imploy it in the ſervice of thy God: why ſhould thy honey be turned into gall, thy ſhield into a ſword, thy delicates into poyſon? Oh let thy life be expended by thee, as it was intended*

Quis hoc credere queat, mutamus naturam rerum iniquitatibus noſtris, &c. Salv. de Gub. l. 6. Pariſ. de Univerſo prim. part. pars tertia. c. 9. Petrarch dial. de valet. corp. *Eſt perniciosa ſanitas quæ ad inobedientiam ducit.* Bern. de inter dom.

by God, ſo ſhalt thou have cauſe to take up the Apoſtles language, God had mercy on me. And thus much ſhall ſuffice for the ſecond particular, I haſten to the

3. *Opportunity* of the *time*, which is the laſt branch implyed in the *exceptive But*. And a *comfortable But* it is; indeed, the *ſickneſſe*, like a *flood* was *carrying* him away, *God* puts in a *But* and *ſtops* its current; *Epaphroditus* was *falling* into the *pit*, *But God reacheth* forth an *hand* to *uphold* him. *God* doth not *ſo preſerve* him that the *ſickneſſe* ſhould *not come*, nay, when it is *come* he doth not *hinder* it from *increaſing*, but when it is *come* to the *height*, then he *rebuketh* the *diſeaſe*, and ſaith, *hitherto thou ſhalt come and no further*. All *hopes* of his *recovery* in *mans eyes* are *periſhed*, and lo, he is *raiſed* by the *hand* of *God*. *Means* either are *not afforded*, or however *unable* to *help*. *God* becommeth his *Phyſitian*, and *commandeth* the *cure*. It lets us ſee thus much, that

Jo. 5. 7. *En horam tuam domine, adest enim deus cui homo deeſt.* Velaſq. in Phil. *Herodes gentis judaicæ invaſit regnum, libertatem ſuſtulit, prophanavit ſanctaz quicquid cultus eſt, abolevit, merito ergo genti ſanctæ quia humana deſunt, divina ſuccurrant.* Chriſol. ſerm. 116.

When all hopes are liveleſſe, and helps ſeem fruitleſſe, then is the ſeaſon of Gods deliverance. That *childs* condition is very *ſad, whom the father and mother forſake*; but then the *Pſalmiſt* finds *God ready* to *take him up*: And the *cauſall* particle in the Originall is very conſiderable, not onely *when*, but *becauſe* he was as a *forſaken* babe, *God* vouchſafeth to *protect* and *provide* for him; our *extremity* being not onely the *opportunity when*, but a *motive why* God will deliver. It was a dolefull *complaint* which the poore *Creeple* made to *Chriſt*, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω, *I have not a man to put me into the poole*, but even that *narration* is an efficacious *prayer*; *The abſence of mans help, being the ſeaſon of Chriſts preſence and ſuccour.* Saint *Paul* ſpeaking of our bleſſed Saviours *Incarnation*, ſaith, it was *when the fulneſſe of time came*; if you will know when that full time was, the *Evangeliſt* anſwereth, it was *in the dayes of Herod the King*: and if with *Chryſologus* you looke into thoſe dayes, you ſhall find them *dayes* of extreame *miſery* to the *Jewiſh* Nation, their *Temple profaned, Liberty ſuppreſſed, Worſhip aboliſhed*, and the *whole State full of confuſion*. In thoſe *dayes* was the *fulneſſe*, becauſe indeed the *fitneſſe* of time come for him, who was the *Redeemer*, to *appeare*, and the *horne of ſalvation to be raiſed up*. In which reſpect the *Meſſiah* is called by *Moſes* a

fit

ſit man, or according to the *Originall*, *a man of opportunity*. *Thy way oh God is in the ſea, and thy paths in the great waters*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. By which expreſſions no doubt he *chiefly* intends (as appeares by what followeth) to *note* the imperceptible *ſecrecie* attending upon many of *Gods* diſpenſations, ſo that we can *no more diſcerne* the *reaſon* of them, than we can any *impreſſion* of a *ſhips paſſage* in the *Sea*, but yet withall it is not an improbable *alluſion* to underſtand *Sea* and *great waters* repreſenting doleful and *perillous* diſtreſſes: Gods uſual courſe being to *manifeſt* himſelf not in the *ſhallow* river of a *ſlight* trouble, but the *deep* ſea of ſome *deſperate* calamity. The *Diſciples enter into a ſhip*, but *Chriſt comes not*, the ſable *mantle* of the *night* covers them, and *Chriſt cometh not*, the *winde* bloweth, the *ſtorme* rageth, the *waves* ariſe, and *yet Chriſt appeareth not*, but when they have *rowed* 25. *or* 30. *furlongs*, *being farre from land*, and in the *depth of danger*, then they *ſee Jeſus walking on the Sea*, and drawing *nigh* to the *ſhip* to *ſuccour* them. To this purpoſe is S. *Cyrills* obſervation upon this *ſtorie*, *Chriſt* doth not preſently at the *beginning* of the ſtorme *appeare* to his *Diſciples*, but when they had *rowed far from land*. *Chriſt* is not alwayes at *hand* upon the firſt *onſet*, but when through *prevailing fear*, & almoſt over-whelming *danger*, our *ſpirits* begin to *fail*, then he *breaks forth* as it were in the *midſt* of the *waves*, *calming* the *ſtorm*, *expelling* our *feare*, and *preventing* our *ruine*.

Pſal. 77. 19.

Ioh. 6. 19. ἐπιτήρει ὅπως ἂν ὑυδὺς ἀποπλέυσαιν ἀλλ' ἦν ἀρχὴ τῶν κινδύνων ἧς ἦν τῷ σκάφει χεὶς & ἐπιφάνεια. Cy. Alex. in Joh.

It is very obſervable in that hundred and ſeventh *Pſalme*, when the *Prophet* celebrateth *Gods* goodneſſe to *ſeverall* ſorts of men in their *dangers*, that their *deliverance* was not *vouchſafed* till their *danger* appeared *remedileſs*: of travellers it is ſaid, they *wandered ſo long in the wildernes, till by reaſon of hunger and thirſt their ſoule fainted in them, and then*, not till then upon their *crying the Lord delivered them*; The *Captives* are ſaid to *ſit in darkneſſe and the ſhadow of death, by reaſon of their bonds*, yea, to *fall downe and none to help them*, and *then* this *want of help obtaineth help*, at their earneſt *cry God ſaveth them out of their diſtreſſe*; when *ſick*, men are brought ſo low that their *ſoule abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh to the gates of death*, then *God ſendeth his Word and healeth them*: finally, the *Seamans ſoule is melted becauſe of trouble, they reele*

Pſal. 107. 3, 4, 5. ὃ δὲ χωεισμὸς τῆς δυναμεως ἐυρεῖν βοήθεια. Greg. Nyſſ. Tract in Pſ. ver. 10, 12, 13. ver. 18, 20.

to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, yea, are at their wits
Ver. 26. 27, 28, 29. end, not knowing what courſe to take, ere God begins to make the ſtorme a calme, and ſo bringeth them out of their diſtreſſe. Thus God, as he can, ſo uſually he doth help at a pinch, when Jacob wants bread at home, Joſeph is heard of abroad: when the Prodigall wants abroad, he is minded of going home; and
Pſal 142. 4. when we looke with David on the right hand, and there is no man, yea, on the left hand, nay round about us, and all refuge faileth us,

Reſtat iter cœlo,

we may looke up to God, and God is ready to looke downe from heaven and help us.

And now if you ſhall inquire why God is pleaſed to cull out ſuch a time of ſuccour, when in extreame perill, of curing, when ſick nigh to death: I anſwer, it is both in reference to himſelfe and us.

In regard of himſelfe,

1. Partly that it may appeare to be his worke, Thoſe effects in the production of which, God is as it were cauſa ſocia a copartner, making uſe of probable meanes, too often the inſtrument is more looked upon than God; but thoſe effects wherein he is cauſa ſolitaria, the ſole agent (effecting them as it were by his owne hand) enforce men to acknowledge it
Velaſq. in Phil. Permittit deus creſcere pericula ut periclitantium merita augeantur: extremè autem periclitantibus opem ferens ſuam potentiam demonſtret. Mend in lib. 1. Reg. cap. 2. n. 6. is his doing. *Quando humana omnem ſpem negant, tunc divina diſpenſatio clare fulget*, In the day-time, when other ſtarres appeare not, we know the light which ſhines is onely from the Sun; ſo when ſecundary meanes ſucceed not to whom but God can the patient aſcribe his recovery? and for this reaſon, *ne opus cœleſtis dextræ aſſignaretur virtuti humanæ*, that the creature may not rob him of his glory, he chuſeth that time to deliver when the creature can afford no ſuccour.

Pſal 17. 7. Θαυμάσωσον τὰ ἐλέη σου. Sept. Mirifica miſericordias tuas. Vulg. 2. Chiefly, that in ſuch works he may appear to be a God, in as much as his Almighty power and mercy, hereby become illuſtrious: it is the prayer of David, ſhew thy mevailous loving kindeneſſe; the Septuagint and vulgar (agreeing in this with the Hebrew) render it, make thy mercyes wonderfull, and ſurely when our miſery is moſt dolefull, Gods mercy is moſt wonderfull, and therefore, ſaith Saint Gregory, we moſt admire Gods benignity,

benignity, when we call to minde our calamity: indeed *God* bringeth us *nigh to death*, that we may *know our ſelves* how fraile and mortall we are, that he may *know us*, or rather *make knowne to us and others* our *graces*, and when we are *nigh to death* he hath *mercy*, that we may *know him*, not onely *ſpeculatively*, but *experimentally*, how *great* and *mighty*, how *good* and *gracious* he is: The truth is, *Omnipotenti medico, nullum vulnus inſanabile*, *No wound is incurable to this omnipotent Phyſitian:* and that he may appeare to be ſo, he often *deferreth* the cure till *humane* skill and helpe *faileth*. In *ſuch* deliverances, the *characters* of *Gods almighty* goodneſſe are *plainly* written ſo, that the blind *Egyptians* can *read* them; and therefore ſeeing the *Iſraelites* eſcape an imminent danger they acknowledge the *Lord fighteth for them*.

Tunc noſtris miſericordiæ dei mirificatur cum nobis ad memoriam miſeriæ noſtræ revocantur. Greg. hom. 18. in Ezech. *Noſtra ex tot quod Dei poſtentiam vincat, nihil quod omnipotenti illi nutui obſiſtere valeat.* Sophr. Arch. hom. in Bible pat.

In reſpect of *us*, that the *deliverance* may be the more *acceptable* to *us*, as well as *honourable* to *him*, *To every thing*, ſaith *Solomon*, *there is a ſeaſon*, and indeed it is the *ſeaſon* that putteth a *beauty* upon *every thing*; in this regard, that of the Prophet *quam ſpecioſi*, *how beautifull are the feeet of him that bringeth good tidings*, is rendered by *Tertullian*, *quam tempeſtivi*, *how opportune*, that which is *ſeaſonable* being ever *beautifull*; indeed in every opportune mercy there is a *double* beauty, the *one* in the *thing* conferred, the *other* in the *time* of conferring it. It is the *prayer* of the *Church* to *God*, *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh with thy glorie and thy majeſty*, which latter words the *vulgar* latine reads *cum ſpecie tua & pulchritudine tua*, that is to ſay, *with thy beauty and thy beauty:* and this is then moſt fully verified, when *God girds his ſword* to *defend* his *Church* in her *loweſt* miſery, and *offend* his *enemies* in their *higheſt* inſolency. It is a *ſweet* and choice expreſſion of the *Prophet*, *The Lord will wait that he may be gracious*, which though it be *chiefly* intended of his *forbearing judgement*, yet it is no leſſe true of his *withholding mercy*: God therefore oft times *delaying*, that he may *appeare* the *more gracious* in *beſtowing* deliverance; ſo true is that of the *Father*, *Deus cum differt non negat ſed commendat dona*, *God in ſuſpending intends not to deny, but onely to commend his mercy*. *Abrahams childe* was more *welcome* at *ſeaventy*, than if he had been given at *thirty*, and the ſame

τί τέτε θαυμαστότερον ἢ μέιζον τῆς τῶ θεῶ μεγαλοποιίας τεχμήριον ὅταν ἐκ τῶν ἐσχάτων θέλη πόρον δῶναι τοῖς πράγμασι. Greg. Naz. Orat 32. Iſa. 52. 7. Tertul. contra Mar. l. 5. c 2. Pſal 45. 3. Iſa. 30. 18. οὐ γὰρ ὅτω χρείας ἀτην λοῖς κινδυνεύουσιν ἐπιδῶναι τὴν σωτηρίαν πᾶσαν ἀυλοῖς τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ

Iſaac

ζῆν ἐλπίδι περιπολιμένῳ & ἤδη τῷ φόβῳ. Cyr. Alex. in Joh. 6. 19.

Iſaac had not beene ſo *precious*, had he not been as *miraculouſly reſtored* as *given*. *In fine*, the *language* of a *depopulating* warre is the beſt *rhetorick* to *extoll* the *bleſſing* of *peace*, how *welcome* is a *calme* to the *Marriner* after a *bluſtering* ſtorme? and *health* is never ſo *amiable*, as when it brings *letters of commendation* from a *long* and *dangerous ſickneſſe*.

Eraſm. ſimil.

To apply this, It is a *meditation* which ſhould encourage us to *truſt* in *God*, even when *things* are at the *worſt*, and though all other ſuccours faile, not to let goe our hold of him: As *Apelles* ſtriving to paint a *drop* of *foam* falling from a *Horſes* mouth, after long ſtudy, *deſpairing*, let his *pencill* fall, and that *fall* did it, *Quod aſſequi non potuit caſus expreſſit*, effecting by *chance* what he could not by *art*, and when both *nature* and *art* can goe *no further*, divine *providence* undertaketh, nay, *effecteth* the *worke*, and therefore, as the *Apoſtle* ſaith of *joy*, I ſay of *hope*, *hope alwayes in the Lord*, indeed, *magna indolis eſt ſperare ſemper*, it is an argument of an *heroick* minde, to hope *alwayes*, and of a *pious* minde to place that *hope* on *God*; *David* ſaith of *himſelfe*, I *have hoped in thy word*, the *Septuagint* read it ἐπήλπισα, and the *vulgar* Latine accordingly *ſuperſperavi*, which as S. *Ambroſe* interpreteth it, is *ad ſperandum ſemper creſcere & ſpem ſpei adjungere*, *to add hope to hope*, *& that even then when affliction is added to affliction*: Excellent to this purpoſe is that *counſel* of the *Greeke* Father, *When externall means are leaſt*, *let thy confidence be greateſt*, *for then God diſplayeth his power moſt*, *not at the beginning*, *but when things are deſperate*, *for this is the ſeaſon of divine help*. It is our great *fault* that in *diſmall* dangers we *open* the *eye* of *ſenſe*, and onely *pore* upon the *extremity* of the *trouble*, whereas it becometh a *Saint*, even then to *open* the *eye* of *faith*, and *looke* upon the *energy* of *Gods power*.

Phil. 3 1. Flor. l 4 c. 8.

Juſtus ſemper ſperat & in adverſis poſitus & frequentibus afflictum erumnis ſperare non novit. Ambr. in Pſ. 118. oct 19.

ὅταν εἰς ἄπειρον τὰ περίγματα ἐμπέσῃ τότε μάλιστα ἐλπίζε. &c. Chryſ. in Pſal. 117.

And to carry it one ſtep further, Let even the *depth* of *miſery* be an *incouragement* to our *confidence*, in as much as that is a *time* of deliverance: when the *night* is at the *darkeſt*, we know *day-break* is *neareſt*, the *lowneſſe* of the *ebbe* argueth the *flowing* in of the *tide* to be at hand: ſo may we *conclude* divine *ſuccour approaching* from the *premiſſes* of a grievous *calamity encompaſſing*. We read in the *viſion* of the *wheel*, which *Ezekiel* ſaw

Ezek. 1. 16.

laid him by the *rivers* brinke with no other *ſhelter* but an *arke of bulruſhes*: how *likely* is this helpleſſe *Babe* to be *ſtarved* with *cold*, or *tumble* into the *river*, or be *devoured* with a wild *beaſt*? *But behold*, whileſt the *childe* is in this imminent *danger*, and the *parents* in perplexing *feare*, *providence* ſo ordereth it, that *Pharaoh's daughter* becometh as a *mother* to the *child*, and the *childes mother* is appointed to be his *nurſe*, whereby his *life* is preſerved.

Quid mirabilius contingere poſuit illa, quæ cum dolore puerum expoſuerat, nunc cum gaudio eum recipit. Fer. Com. Exod 2 8. Exod 14 21. *Aquæ quæ timebantur dextrâ lævâq; famulis dei muru[m] effectæ, non ſolum perniciem neſciunt, ſed & munimen exhibent.* Orig. hom. in Exod.

How *ſmall* did the *diſtance* ſeeme betweene *Jonah* and *death*, when the *mercifull marriners* were *enforced* for *ſaving* their *owne* lives to *caſt* him into the *mercileſſe Sea*, and yet there he *ſinketh not*, a *divine hand* as it were *holding* him by the *chinne*, when in the *Sea ſwallowed* by a greedy *Whale*, and there hee *dyeth not*; *God* would not *deliver* him from the *tempeſt*, he will from the *whale*; that which was moſt *likely* to *conſume* him becometh the *meanes* to *preſerve* him, within *three dayes* the *Whale* delivereth him *ſafe*, *whole*, and *alive* upon dry *ground*.

Patiendo ſuſtinuit abſorberi Jonam à ceto non ut abſorberetur & in totum periret, ſed ut evomitus magis, ſubigeretur Deo, & plus glorificaret deum qui inſperabilem ſalutem ei dediſſet. Iræn. adv. hær. l. 3 c. 22.

Who ever *thought* to have ſeene thoſe *three worthies alive* after they *fell downe bound into the midſt of a fiery burning furnace*? *But behold* a *martyrdome effected without dying*, whileſt a *fourth like the Sonne of God appeareth*, at whoſe *commande* the *fire forgetteth* to *burne*, or ſo much as *ſcorch*.

O martyrium & ſine paſſione perfectum, ſatis paſſi ſatis exuſti ſunt, quos propterea Dus texit, ne poteſtatem ejus mentiri videremur Tertul. Scorp. cap. 8.

Who did not *expect* but that *Daniel* being *caſt into a denne of* ravenous *Lions*, ſhould be *devoured* before the next *morning*, nay, the next *houre*? *But ſee*, the *Lyons mouthes are ſtopped by an Angel*, and ſince they cannot feed *Daniel*, are forced to *keep* a *faſt with* him.

Venit Leo & laceravit leonem

Were not *Paul* and his *company* in great *jeopardy* of *death*, when the thick *clouds* had for *many* dayes *obſcured* the light of

Sun and *Starres* from them, the violent ſtormes exceedingly toſſed the *Ship*, enforced them to *caſt* out the *goods*, yea, every *moment* they expect *themſelves* to be made a *prey* to the roring *waves*, all hope that they *ſhould be ſaved being taken away? but behold*, that night *an Angell of God ſtandeth by Paul*, and from *God aſſures him of his and their preſervation.*

To come yet *nearer* to the *inſtance* of the *Text*:

It was no ſlight *ſickneſſe* afflicted *David*, when he ſaid, *My heart panteth, my ſtrength faileth me, as for the light of mine eyes it is gone from me*; the *diſeaſe* (it ſeemeth) had *ſeized* upon all his *ſpirits*, his *animals* in the *dimneſſe* of his *eyes*, his *naturall* in the *failing* of his *ſtrength*, his *vitall* in the *panting* of his *heart*; and ſurely then *it* muſt needes *bring* him very *nigh to death*; yea, it ſeemeth *David feared* it, which made him ſo earneſtly pray againſt it in another *Pſalm*: But when *death* is *neare*, *God* is *neare* too, *hearing* his *prayer*, and *preſerving* his *life*.

It is ſaid of *Hezekiah*, that he was *ſick unto death*, the *diſeaſe* was *ſuch* that he *reckoned his bones ſhould be broken, and an end made of him*, yea, he *received* a *ſentence* of *death* from *God* by the *Prophet*, *Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt dye and not live*: *But* that *threat* was onely like *Abrahams precept*, not a *declaration* of what *God intended* to doe, but onely a *probation* to try what *Hezekiah* would *doe*; and therefore notwithſtanding the *diſeaſe* was *deadly*, *God* becometh his *Phyſitian*, preſcribeth a *plaiſter of figgs*, and *Hezekiah* is *healed*.

The *Centurions* Sonne is viſited with a *Feaver*; that *Feaver* bringeth him to the very *point of death*, when as at the *Centurions* intreaty, *Chriſt* with a *word commands* his *recovery*.

That *womans* condition was *deſperate*, when ſhe was at once brought *low* in *eſtate* and *body*: her *goods* are *gone*, her *diſeaſe continueth*, the *Phyſitians* have *emptied* her *purſe*, but cannot *ſtay* her *flux*, nor is there any likelyhood but that this *ſickneſs* will at length *bring* her to her *grave*. *But* her *deplorable* ſtate is a fit *occaſion* for *Chriſt* to magnifie his *mercy*, whileſt by a *believing touch* of his *garment* he maketh her perfectly *whole*.

Finally, *Martha* ſends *Chriſt* word hat *Lazarus is ſick*; *Chriſt delayeth* to *come*, onely lets her know *this ſickneſſe ſhould be*

ob oreluvin: Rab. in Lap. ſuper loc. Ὁ σον καλὰ τὴν φύσιν τῶ πραγματ ἀπώλοντο ἂν ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς ἐκώλυσεν. Chryſ. in Act. *Quod genus morbi & naturæ vires attinet prorſus eſſet moriturus niſi ſingulari dei conſilio ſervaretur.* Muſc. in loc. *Solo juſſu ſaluti reddidit qui voluntate omnia creavit.* Greg. Mag in Evan. hom. 28. *Poſt certamina deſperata medicorum poſt medicamina ſumptuoſa, poſt inanem & antiquiſſimam curam ubi ars et peritia deſe erat jam curantium ubi languentis omnis jam conſumpta fuerat ſubſtantia ipſi autori reverendum vulnus non caſu ſed divinitus occurrit, ut quod humana arte tot annis curari non potu-*

be for Gods glory: being *ſick* he *dyeth*, *dying* is *buried*, and having been ſome dayes *buried* he *rotteth*, nay *ſtinketh in the grave*; and *now* is the *time* come for *Chriſt* by his powerfull *voice* to *raiſe* him from the ſleep of *death*, and bed of the *grave*.

Loe here, *more* than a *Jury* of *textuall* witneſſes, to which many *more* might be *added* (*beſides* this in the *Text*) all *aſſerting* this *truth*, and thereby *aſſuring* our *faith* of *Gods deliverance* in the worſt *extremity*. To all which give me *leave* to *adde one more*, even my *owne* late *experience* of *Gods marvailous kindeneſſe* vouchſafed to me.

It is not many *weekes* agoe ſince it *pleaſed* the wiſe *God* to *viſit* me with a ſore and violent *Feaver*; that *Feaver* ſo *exhauſted* my *ſpirits*, and *enervated* my *body*, that I might well *take* up *Davids* expreſſion, *There was but a ſtep betweene me and death*: Much about that *time* when the *dayes* of the *yeare* are at the *longeſt*, the *dayes* of my *life* ſeemed to be at the *ſhorteſt*. Thus was the *firſt* part of this *Text* verified, *I was ſick nigh to death*, indeed *ſo nigh*, that I was *as a dead* man in the *opinion* of the *learned*, yea, actually *dead* and *buried* in the *report* of the *vulgar*, and truly I had *ere this* beene not onely *foure dayes* with *Lazarus*, but *more* than *four weeks putrifying* in the *grave*, had not *divine goodneſſe* prevented: *But God had mercy on me*, and ſo the *other part* of my *Text* is likewiſe fulfilled: when the *ſickneſſe* had almoſt *weighed* me downe into the *pit*, *God* was pleaſed to *put* a *graine* of *mercy* and *turne* the *ſcale*, ſo that *I* am here (beloved) *this day*, before *God*, *Angels*, and *men*, as a *bird eſcaped* out of a ſtrong *ſnare*, as a *prey plucked* out of the *jawes* of a devouring *Lion*, as a *brand ſnatched* out of the *fire* of a burning *feaver*.

What therefore *remaineth*, but that as in the *beginning*, ſo now in the *cloſe* of this *diſcourſe* I *take* up a *gratulation*, *Bleſs the Lord oh my ſoul, and let all that is within me praiſe his holy name*; when I *forget* to *mention this deliverance*, *let my right hand forget its cunning*; when I *ceaſe* (as *opportunity* offereth it ſelfe) to *publiſh this mercy*, *let my tongue cleave to the roofe of my mouth*; nor yet would *I* be *one*, in this work of *praiſe*; do *you* (all you here preſent) *joyne* with me. I doubt not but *many*, the *moſt*, nay

it, ſola fide & humilitate curatur. Chryſol. Serm. 33. *Videtis quemadmodum dat locum morti, licentiam dat ſepulchro, corruptioni poſſe permittit, nigit nil put edini, nil fœtori: atque ut Tartarus rapiat, trahat, habeat, admittit, atque agit, ut humana ſpes tota pereat, et tota vis munianæ diſperationis accedat, quatenus quod facturus eſt divinum ſit, non humanum.* Chryſol. ſerm. 63.

1 Sam 20.3. *June* the 10. my diſeaſe was at the higheſt.

Pſal. 103. 1. 137. 5, 6.

nay *all* of you in ſome *kinde*, at ſome *time* or other, have had *experience* of eminent *deliverances*: oh *call* them now to *mind*, & let your grateſull *remembrance* come up as a *memoriall before the Lord*: I doubt not but *many* of you, yea, *very many*, did *put* up *prayers*, fervent prayers at the *throne of grace* for this *mercy* (which I now *celebrate*) my *recovery*. Indeed *brethren*, I look upon my *health*, as S. *Paul* on his *preſervation*, as a *gift* 2 Cor. 1. 11. *beſtowed on me by the meanes* (to wit, for the ſakes and prayers) *of many*; and ſurely as *prayers* have been *made*, ſo *fit* it is *thanksgiving* ſhould be *returned* by *many* on *my behalfe*, it were a *ſhame* to be *zealous* in *begging* and *cold* in *bleſſing*; to *cry* aloud *give us our dayly bread*, and onely *whiſper hallowed be thy name*. Pſal. 72. 18, 19. *Bleſſed* therefore be the *Lord God* of his unworthy ſervant, *who alone doth wondrous things*; yea, *bleſſed be his glorious name for ever*, and let all that have beene *petitioners for* me *ſay with* me at *leaſt* in their *hearts*, *Amen*, *Amen*.

And now my *Dearly beloved Pariſhioners*, *and freinds in the Lord*, what is my *deſire*, but that *you* may have *cauſe* in *alluſion* to the following *words* of this *verſe*, to ſay, *God had mercy*, *not on him onely*, *but us alſo*; that *my preſervation* may be for *your edification*, as well for *my conſolation*: that *you*, who have *already* found *benefit* by my weak *Miniſtery*, may be more *ſtrengthned*; and thoſe, who have heretofore been *unprofitable*, may now be *bettered*. Which that it may be ſo, it ſhall be *my endeavour*: let it be *your prayer* for me, *that I may doe this worke of Chriſt more diligently and faithfully than ever*; it ſhall be *my prayer* for you, let it be *your endeavour* to *heare the Word of Chriſt more attentively and obediently for the time to come*. So ſhall *you* have *cauſe* to *bleſſe God* for *me*, and *I* to *bleſſe God* for *you*. Yea at that *laſt* and great *day* you ſhall have *joy* in *me*, if my *preaching* become a *means* of your *converſion* and *ſalvation*; and *I* ſhall have *joy* in *you*, whoſe *converſion* and *ſalvation* ſhall prove an *increaſe* of my *reward*, and an *addition* to my *glorie*. Which God grant, &c.

FINIS.

Mercy in her Beauty:

OR,

THE HEIGHT OF A DELIVERANCE

FROM THE

DEPTH OF DANGER.

Set forth in the firſt SERMON

Preached upon that Occaſion,

By NATH: HARDY, Maſter of Arts,
and Preacher to the Pariſh of S. *Dionis Back-Church.*

PSAL. 118. 17, 18, 19.

I ſhall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.
The Lord hath chaſtened me very ſore, but he hath not given me over to death.
Open unto me the gates of righteouſneſſe, I will goe into them, and I will praiſe the Lord.

Baſil. Mag. Hom. 9.

Δεῖ ἡμᾶς μὴ ἐκκακεῖν ἐν τοῖς θλίψεσιν ἀλλ' ἀναμένειν τὴν ἀγαθότητα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Aug. in Pſal. 41.

Quia magis crebra ſunt mala, dulcior erit miſericordia tua. Etenim ſcriptum eſt quodam loco ſpecioſa miſericordia Domini in tempore tribulationis, ſicut nubes pluviæ in tempore ſiccitatis.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. G.* for *Nath: Web* and *Will: Grantham*, at the *Black Beare* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, neere the little North-Doore. 1653.

owtward *bounty*, that is in the *heart*, this in the *hand*; that the *bowels* of mercy, this the *works* of mercy; that called by the *Greekes* ἔλεος, and this ἐλεήμοσυνη, and *both* theſe, though not in the *ſame* ſenſe, are *attributed* to *God*, and here to be *underſtood*.

Miſericordia nonnullis quod miſerum cor faciat. Aug. contr. adv. leg. l. 1. c. 20. *Miſericors dicitur aliquis quaſi miſerum cor habens.* Aquin par. prim. q. 21. art. 3. Iſa. 63. 6. Ierem 31. 20. Pſal. 103. 16. *Nobis non ſibi loquitur atque ideo noſtris utitur in loquendo.* Hilar. in Pſ 126

1. In *mercy* there is a *laying* of anothers *miſery* to *heart*, The *Greeke* word ἐλεέω is derived from the *Hebrew* רחם which ſignifieth *Ejulare*, *plangere*, to *bewaile* and *lament*: a *condolency* with our Brothers *calamity*, being a choice *ingredient* of *mercy*. This is that which the *Holy Ghoſt* afferteth of *God* in Scripture, where it is ſaid, *in all their afflictions he was afflicted*: And againe, *My bowels are troubled*: And againe, *Like as a Father pittyeth his Children, ſo the Lord pittyeth them that feare him*: But withall, we muſt know, that in theſe *Phraſes* the *moſt high* is pleaſed to *condeſcend*, and ſpeaking *to men*, to ſpeak of himſelfe, *as if* he were *a man*. There is not then any ſorrow or *compaſſion* in him who is *impaſſible*, but by this is repreſented his *good will* towards his people, whereby he is *propenſe* to ſuccour them. And becauſe the *afflicted* perſon findes oft times much *eaſe* and ſolace in that *ſympathie*, which another expreſſeth towards him, that we may know the *like* ſolace is to be found in *God*, this *compaſſion* is *attributed* to *God*; and indeed is, though not *formally*, yet *æquivalently*, nay *eminently* verified of him. To bring this home, in that *God* is ſaid to *have mercy* on dying *Epaphroditus*, it implyeth thus much, that *God beholding* and taking *notice of*, was as it were *affected* with his imminent *danger*, having after a ſort a *friendly* pitty, and *motherly* yearning, or rather a *fatherly* good-will towards *him*. But this is not all that *mercy* includeth, and therefore know,

μεγάλα δ' τυχοῦντι φάσμακον ἔλεος Καὶ τὸ συναλγεῖν γνησίως ποθύ τι κοφίζει τῆς σύμφορας. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 16. *Miſericordia eſt aliena miſeriæ in cor noſtrum compaſſio qui utique (ſi poſſimus) ſubvenire compellimur.* Aug. de civit. dei. l. 9. c. 8.

2. In *mercy* there is an *indeavour* to *relieve* him whoſe *miſery* it *condoleth*, as ſhe *ſuffereth with*, ſo ſhe *doth for*, and (according to her *ability*) either *helpeth* him to *beare* the *burden* by *putting* under her *ſhoulder*, or wholly *caſeth* him of it by *removing* it from his *ſhoulder*. Hence the definition of mercy is well given to be *ſuch a compaſſion of anothers miſery, as puts upon a cheerfull imploying our power for the ſuſtaining him under, and delivering him out of it*. This is that which

in

in a *proper* and genuine ſenſe agreeth to *God*, whoſe *property* is to *deliver his* out of their *afflictions*, and *preſerve* them from *deſtruction*: and this no doubt, is that which our *Apoſtle* here eſpecially *intends* in this expreſſion, *God had mercy on him*, that is, he did *remove* his *miſery*, and *prevent* his *death* by *curing* him of that *ſickneſſe* which had brought him *nigh* to it.

Triſtari de miſeriâ alterius non competit Deo, ſed repellere miſeriam alterius hoc munere ei competit. Aquin. par. prim. qu. 21. a. 3.

Let the ſame minde be in us that is in *God*: when our brethren are under *ſickneſſe*, or any other *diſtreſſe*, to *have mercy on them*. It was our bleſſed *Saviours* reaſoning with the *Phariſees*, though not altogether to the ſame purpoſe, *Which of you ſhall have an Aſſe or an Ox fall into the pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out?* Surely *one man* is of more worth then *many Aſſes*; and ſhall we not, in what we may, *ſuccour* him when fallen into ſome grievous *ſickneſſe?*

Nomen miſericordiæ pro opere. Zanch. in loc. *Dicitur miſericordia, quod miſeriæ cujuſdam eſt Remotio,* Eſt. ibid.

That good *Samaritan* in the *Type* is no other than *Chriſt* in the *Truth*, who pityed and *healed man* when dangerouſly *wounded* by *ſinne*, and as it was the *deſigne* of his *death* to cure mankinde of his *ſpirituall* ſickneſſe, ſo his *practiſe* in the courſe of his life to *go about doing good and healing*. If we call our ſelves *Chriſtians*, whom ſhould we *imitate* but *Chriſt*, by performing all *offices* of love to the *ſick*, which lye within our Spheare? and if we have no *oyle* but that of *compaſſion*, no *wine* but *teares* and *prayers*, let them be *poured* into the wounds and *diſeaſes* of thy *neighbour*; ſo ſhall we bee *Diſciples of Chriſt*. But the *Text* leads us yet one *ſtep* higher from *Chriſt*, as *man*, and as *God-man*, to *Chriſt* as *God*, acquainting us with *Gods mercy* to a *ſick* man: and what more befitting *man* then to *imitate God* by practiſing this *God-like* worke of mercy. μέγα καὶ τίμιον ἀλλὴ ἐλεήμων, *a mercyfull*

οὐκ ἔστιν ἀτιμώτερος σὸι τῶν κτήνως ὃ ἄνθρωπ@ ὦ ἄνθρωποι. &c. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

ἄνθρωπ@ ἃ ἀλλὰ ἱερουσαλὴμ ὃ παράδεισ@, ἱεριχὼ ὃ κόσμ@ λῄσαι διπονηρὸι λόγισμοι

χὴ ἢ παράβασι, ταμαείτης ὃ χεί'σ@. Athanaſ. qu. 15. de parab. *δὸς ἀντὶ μεγάλε πεξθυμίαν ἔι μηδὲν ἔχης δάκρυσον.* Greg. Naz. Orat. 16. *A Chriſto diſcit eſſe chriſtianis nam et ipſa qua Chriſtus ambularet, & vos debetis ambulare.* Bern. Ser. ad paſt. Prior. 6. Sept. *Vere Magnus qui divini operis interpres eſt ut imitatur* Amb. in Pſ. 118. *τὶ ἄλλον χὴ ἢ χὶ θεὸν σε πεξσκαλεῖται γενέδαι ὃ λόγ@, οἱονεὶ μεξυθέντα τῶ τῆς θεότητ@ ἰδιώμαλι.* Greg. Nyſſ. de Beat. Or. 5. *γενῆ τῶ ἀτυχοῦντι θε@ ἢ ἔλεον θεῦ μιμησάμεν@.* Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

man is great and honourable, and that for this reaſon chiefly, becauſe he is *like* to *God*, in which reſpect *Gregory Nyſſen*, and *Nazianzen* call ſuch a *man* a *God*, as having *ſtampt* upon him the *Character* of a *Deity*. *Bee yee therefore followers of God as deare Children*, is Saint *Paul*'s counſell in *generall*, *Be you mercifull, as your Father alſo is mercifull*, ſo our bleſſed *Saviour* adviſeth in *ſpeciall*: and yet more *particularly*, as *God had mercy on ſick* Epaphroditus, ſo let *us* on our *ſick* neighbour, by *viſiting* him, (if we can by our *skill* or *counſell* doe him good) however by *compaſſionating* him, and *interceding* with *God* in his behalfe.

Eph. 6.1.
Luke 6.36
Nihil dignius quam ut homo ſit autoris ſui imitator, & ſecundum modum propriæ facultatis divini ſit operis executor.
Leo de quadr. Serm. 5.

And becauſe this *duty* is that which (though ſo *honourable*) we are *averſe* from; give me leave to carry it a little further, & let you ſee it is *profitable*, as well as honourable. Not only that you may *follow God* in *mercy*, but that you may upon the like occaſion *obtain mercy* from *God*, *ſhew mercy* to others. It is a ſweet *promiſe* to feed on in a time of ſickneſſe. *The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſſe.* That *bed* muſt needs be *eaſie* which *God maketh*, nor can he *faint*, whom *God ſtrengtheneth*; but to whom is it made? *him* and *none* but him *who conſidereth the poore*, ſo our Tranſlation, but the *Hebrew* word דל may as well be rendered *ſick*, one that is *weakned* by a *diſeaſe*: he who *conſidereth others* in their *ſickneſſe*, ſhall be *ſupported* by *God* in *his*. Which of us, beloved, doth not *deſire* that *God* may ſhew that *mercy* to *us* in our *diſtreſſe*, which he did here to *Epaphroditus*? But how can we *expect God* ſhould *grant* that to *us*, which we *deny* to *others*? *Bleſſed are the mercifull*, ſaith *Chriſt*, *for they ſhall obtaine mercy*: Be then oh man to thy ſelfe, a *patterne* of mercy, and ſhew with that *ſpeed*, and in that *degree*, *mercy* to thy *ſick*, weak, languiſhing *neighbour*, which thou wouldſt have *God* vouchſafe to *thee* in the *like* condition. But a little more to *unbowell* this Clauſe.

Pſal. 41.3
Proſpicit pauperi, ægro ægroto, attenuato.
Vatabl ibid.
Improbus petitor, qui quod alii negat ſibi poſtulat. Homo eſto tibi miſericordiæ forma, ſic quomodo vis, quantum vis, quam cito vis miſericordiam tibi fieri, tam cito alii, tantum, taliter ipſe impertire.
Chryſol. Serm. 43.
Mat. 15.7.
Vita mari eſt ſimilis; namque ut mare vita procellas: Hæc habet & ventos naufragiumque frequens.
Anth ſacr.

The *mercy* here intended (as you have already heard) was the *prolongation* of *life*, and *reſtauration* of *health* to *Epaphroditus*: and here a double *queſtion* falls in to be reſolved,

How thie can be called a mercy? And

If a mercy in it ſelfe, yet how a mercy to him?

Queſt.

Qu. 1. It is a plauſible *Objection* which is made, that *life* prolonged is *no* mercy, becauſe it is a calamitous *continuance* in an *evil* world: what is this *world* but a *Coffer* of *Sorrows*, *Labyrinth* of *Troubles*, *Schoole* of *Vanity*, *Market* of *Fraud*, *Theater* of *Tragedyes*, *Flood* of *Teares*, and *Map* of *Ruines*? And can it be a *favour* for a man to *continue* long in a *place* of *miſeries*? The *earth* we tread on, the *aire* we breath in, are as a *Sea*, wherein windes and *ſtormes* are ever blowing; and can it be a *favour* to be ſtill *toſſed* up and downe upon a *bluſtering* tempeſtuous Sea? Finally, this life is not a *life* but a *calamity*, yea, rather a *death* then a *life*, becauſe ſo *miſerable*: to *live long* is to be *long tormented*, and can this be a *mercy*?

ὁ βίος ἀληθῶς ὁ βίος, ἀλλὰ σύμφορος. *Philem.*

Tanta eſt tribulatio hujus miſeræ vitæ, ut nec vita ſit dicenda, ſed potius mors, vel quippiam aliud morte deterius. Idiot de pati. *Quid eſt diu vivere niſi diu torqueri.* Aug. de verb. dom. Serm. 17

Anſw. To all this it is *briefly*, but *fully* anſwered. That though there be many *evils* in the *world*, yet the *world* is not *evil*, nor is it *evil* to *abide* in the *world*. Theſe *miſeries* are only *accidental* to *life*, and ſo hinder not, but that *preſervation* from *death* is a *mercy*. And therefore the *Greek* Fathers upon this *Scripture* do hence moſt rationally *confute* the *Manichees*, who affirme the *world* in its owne nature to *be bad*, τί λέγεις ὦ αἱρέτικε, ſo St. *Chryſoſtome*, ὦ μανιχαῖε. So *Theophilact* in *particular*. *What ſayeſt thou to this, oh hereticall Manichee?* If the *world* be *wicked*, and the *life* which we now live in it, how doth the *Apoſtle* call this a *mercy* of *God*, that he *lengthened Epaphroditus* his dayes? The *other life* is *better* than this, ſurely then *this* muſt be *good*, an *immature death* is threatned, and inflicted as a *judgement*, ſurely then the *continuance* of *life* muſt be a *mercy*, as thoſe forementioned *Fathers excellently* argue,

Chryſoſt. } *in*
Theoph. } *loc.*
Oecum. }

καλὸν ἦ τὸ ταχῦσα ζωὴ ἀυτὴ καθ' ἑαυτὴν. *Theoph. ibid.*

Life is a mercy, and yet *health* is a *greater* mercy. Λῶιον ὑγιαίνειν was written upon the porch of *Apollo*'s Temple, *health* is the *Princeſſe* of *earthly bleſſings*: and *Plato* tells us that ἄριστον ὑγιαίνειν was *ſung* by every one to his *Harpe* at the *Schooles*, and at *Feſtivals*. *Beauty*, *riches*, *health*, were the *three things Pythagoras* ſaid ſhould *chiefly* be *implored* of the *Gods*; but among them *health* the *chiefe*: indeed, it is that which maketh *life* it ſelfe to be a *mercy*, ſince *non eſt vivere ſed valere vita*, *To live is not ſo much to breath, as to be well.*

Ariſtot. Eth. l. 1. c. 8
Plat. in Gorg.
Mart. Ep. 70. l. 6.

Mercies then they are (*eſpecially*) when *conjoyned*, and being ſo

Una eſt causa quæ nos alligatos tenet, amor vitæ qui ut non eſt abjiciendus, ita minuendus eſt. Sen. Ep. 27.

ſo in their owne *nature*, ought ſo to be *eſteemed* of by us: in which reſpect we ought to *pray* and *give thanks* for them as *bleſſings*. It is no leſſe a fault to *undervalue*, then to *overprize* our lives and health: this *latter* (I confeſſe) is the more *common*, but the *former* is no leſſe *culpable*: we muſt not be ſo much in *love* with *life* as to *dote* upon it, becauſe it is *ſhort*, yet we may ſo farre *love*, as to *deſire*, and endeavour that it *may*, yea, with the *Apoſtle* here, *account* it a *mercy*, when *it is prolonged*.

Corpus infra animam eſt & quævis anima vilis excellentiſſimo corpore excellentior invenitur. Aug. in Pſ. 145.

I end this, If *deliverance* from *death* be a *mercy*, how *great* a mercy is *deliverance* from *hell?* If it be a *bleſſing* to have the *danger* of a *mortall diſeaſe prevented*, Oh what is it to have the *guilt* of our *deadly ſinnes pardoned?* Finally, if the *health* of the *body* be a *favour*, how *choice* a benefit is the *ſoules health?* Surely by how much *hell* is *worſe* then *death*, *ſin* then *ſickneſſe*, yea, by how much the *ſoule* is *better* than the *body*, by ſo much is the *one* to be *preferred* before the *other*. *Oh my ſoule, thou waſt ſick, deſperately ſick of ſinne, ſo ſick that thou waſt not only nigh to death, but dead in ſinnes, and treſpaſſes; but God had mercie on thee, he hath ſent his Sonne to heale, to revive thee, by being himſelfe wounded, nay ſlain: and his ſpirit to cure, to quicken thee by killing thy ſinne, and renewing thy nature. Thou art indebted to thy God for temporall, much more for ſpirituall: Bleſſe the Lord, oh my ſoule, for thy life of nature, health of thy body; but let all that is within thee praiſe his holy name for thy life of grace, and eternall ſalvation.*

Chryſ. in loc. *Mors poſt ſit finem omnibus, malis in hâc vitâ, dat terminum malis in hoc ſæculo, adimit omnem calamitatem.* Bern. de mod. viv. Serm. 30.

Qu. 2. But it is further *inquired*, though this *recoverie* were a *mercy* in it ſelfe, yet how could it be ſo *to Epaphroditus* a godly man? Had it been deliverance *by death*, this were a mercy *indeed*; but deliverance *from death* ſeemeth rather an *injury* than a *courteſie*, πρὸς μὲν τὸν διῤῥητικὸν ἔυκολον εἰπεῖν πρὸς δὲ τὸν χρειαν τί ἐροῦμεν, we may eaſily *refell* the *Heretick*, but how ſhall we *anſwer* the *Chriſtians* who *deſiring to be diſſolved* knoweth not how to *eſteeme* the *deferring* his diſſolution a *mercy?* Had *Epaphroditus* been a wicked man, it had been a *great* mercy to *ſpare* him, that he might *make* his *peace* with *God* by the practice of *faith* and *repentance*; but to *him*, whoſe *peace* was *alreadie* made, what *advantage* could the *prolonging*

longing of his *life* afford? *Death* it ſelfe to a *good* man is a *deliverance*, a *totall*, *finall* deliverance from all ſorrow and miſery for ever: And can that be a *deliverance*, which *keepeth off* our *deliverance? per Anguſta pervenitur ad auguſta*, This *red Sea* leads to *Canaan*; through the *valley* of *death* we paſſe to the *mount* of *glory*: And can that be a *mercy* which *retardeth* our *felicity*? Is it a courteſie for a man to be *detained* from his *wages*, and *held* to *labour*? to be *hindred* from *reſt*, and *called* to *worke*? to be *withheld* from his *country*, and *wander* in a *wilderneſſe*? Finally, to be *kept out* of a *Palace*, and *confined* to a *Priſon*? And yet, *all* this is *true* of a *godly* man, who when *nigh to death*, is called back againe to *live longer* in this *world*.

Mortur quidem juſtus ſed ſecure, quippe cujus mors ut præſentis extremum eſt vitæ, ſic futuræ initium meli oris, id. Ep. 105. *erit jamus vitæ, initium refrigerii erit, ſanctæ illius mentis ſcala & ingreſſus in locum tabernaculi*, Id. in ſerm.

Anſw. To *anſwer this*, though upon thoſe forementioned *conſiderations*, it *cannot* be denyed but that *death* is a *mercy* to a *Saint*; yet *thoſe* hinder not, but that in *other* reſpects the *continuance* of *life* is a *mercy*, even to a *godly* man. As for that κοινὴ συνήθεια, which the *Greek* Fathers ſpeak of, as if Saint *Pauls* language were more according to *cuſtome* than *truth*, and that when he calls *recovery* a *mercy*, he rather ſpeaketh as *men doe account*, than as *it is indeed*, it ſeemes to me ſomewhat *harſh*, that τὸ κερδᾶναι Ψυχὰς, the *opportunity* of *gaining* more *ſoules* to *God*, which this *preſervation* afforded him, is a farre more rationall *ſolution*. Upon this account it was Saint *Paul* looked upon the prolongation of his *owne life* as *needfull*: So he expreſſeth it in the former Chapter. And here, for the ſame reaſon, he calleth the *reſtauration* of *Epaphroditus* to health a *mercy*. To this purpoſe Saint *Hieromes note* upon the Text is very *appoſite*, *Miſertus eſt ejus ut majorem docendo colligat fructum*, *God had mercy on him*, that he, being a *Miniſter*, might by the *preaching* of the *Goſpel*, *gather* in more *ſoules*, and doe more good.

Chryſoſt.) *in* Theoph. *loc*

Chriſoſt. ibid. ἄλλον λόγον τὴν ἐντεῦθεν ζωὴν. Καὶ φαμὲν ὅτι δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἄνω σπεύδει ἀναλαβεῖν, ταύτην δὲ τὸ ἐπιμεῖναι ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ δι' ὑμᾶς. Oecu. in Loc. Phil. 1. 24. Hieron. in loc.

Obj. But you will *ſay*, this ſeemes not to be a full Anſwer: Indeed, had the *Apoſtle* ſaid, *but God had mercy on you*, namely the *Philippians*, this would be very *ſuitable*; the *recovery* of a faithfull *Miniſter* is, no doubt, a *mercy* to the *People*; but ſtill it remaineth a *doubt*, how the *Apoſtle* could ſay, as here he doth, *God had mercy on him*, to wit, *Epaphroditus*.

Repl. To which I *reply*, That the *opportunity* of this *service* was not onely a *benefit* to the *Church*, but a *mercy* to *him*, in as much as by this meanes.

Considerandum est non esse parvam dignationem quicum se Deus in nobis glorificat. Calv. in Io.

1. He became a *greater instrument* of *Gods glory*; It is an high *honour*, which *God* vouchsafeth to that man, whom he makes *use* of to *serve* and *honour* him; and to a *pious* soule *nothing* is *dearer* than *Gods glory*, desiring rather to *glorify God* than to be *glorified with him*: this Saint *Paul* declares to his *hope*, yea, his *earnest expectation*, that *Christ might be magnified in his body whether by life or death*. No wonder then, if considering how much *Epaphroditus* his *life* might *conduce* to *Gods glory*, he *reckoned* it as a *mercy*. Besides,

Phil. 1. 20.

Qui Christo vivunt, felicitèr in spem gloriæ cælestis exercentur. Calv. ibid. Dan. 12. 2.

2. He *increased* his *owne reward*; the *longer* a *good man*, especially a *good Minister* liveth, the *more* sinners he *converteth*, and *they that turne many to righteousnesse*, saith *Daniel*, *shall shine as the starres for ever and ever*, nay, *every soule* that a faithfull *Minister winnes* to *God*, is as a new *gemme* added to that *Crown*, which shall one day be *put* upon his *head*.

Thus then the *case* stands; *Epaphroditus* indeed, by *dying*, had *received* his *reward*, but by *living* he *did* the more *service*; by *dying* he had *obtained glory from God*, but by *living* he *brought glory to God*: and our blessed *Saviour* saith, *It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive*; by *dying* he had *enjoyed* his *recompence sooner*, by *living* he *made* it *greater*, *that* would have *accelerated*, but *this augmented* it, so that even in respect of his *owne* future *happinesse* he was no *loser* but a *gainer* by the *prolonging* of his *life*, and therefore most justly doth Saint *Paul* say, *God had mercy on him*.

Act. 20. 35.

Briefly, and yet *clearely* to state the whole matter.

Life and *death* may be *considered* and *compared* foure wayes,

1. In their formall *nature*, and so *death* is a *privation*, *life* a *position* of *good*; and therefore *death evil*, and *life good*,

2. In their *Causes*, *death* is a *fruit* of *sin*, *life* an *effect* of *love*; our *wickednesse* deserved the one, *Gods goodnesse* conferreth the other; in which respect, *death* is *threatned* as a *punishment*, *life promised* as a *reward*.

3. In their naturall and proper *effects*, *death* bereaveth as well

well *godly*, as *wicked* men of the *ſociety* of *friends*, *poſſeſſion* of their *eſtates*, yea, all the *comforts* which this world affords, whereas by *life* we have the *fruition* of them continued to us, ſo that in this regard alſo, *life* is farre *better* than *death*, even to a *good* man.

4. Laſtly, in their accidentall *conſequents*, when a *wicked* man *dyeth* there followeth *torment*, but whileſt he *liveth* there is *hope* of his *repentance*, yea, many times it ſo falls out, ſome *come* into the *Vineyard* at the *eleaventh houre*, and to ſuch *life* is a *choice* mercy indeed: when a *godly* man *dyeth* he is *carried into Abrahams boſome*, *placed* in a ſtate of *bliſſe*; but by *living longer* he *honoureth God*, *edifieth* the *Church*, *worketh* out his *ſalvation*; he gaineth both the more time to *prepare* himſelfe for, get *aſſurance* of, yea, make an *addition* to his future glory, and therefore in *this* likewiſe, and ſo in *all* compariſons *life* hath the *preheminence*, and the continuance of it is juſtly called by the *Apoſtle* a *mercy*.

To cloſe up this, *life* continued, *health* reſtored, are *mercies*; oh let not us by *abuſing* them to *ſinne* turne them into *judgment*, who can *believe* it? and yet we may often *ſee* it, then change *bleſſings* into *curſes* by their iniquities, and as *Pariſienſis* excellently expreſſeth it, *Ipſa beneficia ſibi facient pœnalia & inſtrumenta contrà ſeipſos divinæ juſtitiæ*, *They make benefits to become puniſhments*, *and the fruits of Gods mercy inſtruments of his juſtice*. The truth is, it was not ſo much *life* as the right *uſe*, Saint *Paul* conceived *Epaphroditus* would make of his life, which moved him to *call* it a *mercy*, *Multis periculo & peſtilens ſanitas fuit qui tutius ægrotaſſent*: Indeed theſe things are *good* or *evill* to us according as we *imploy* them. It had been a *greater* mercy to many *impenitent* ſinners that they had continued *ſick*, or *dyed*, then that they were *recovered*. Let us therefore *lay out* our *life*, our *health*, according to our ſeverall places, in *Gods* ſervice, ſo ſhall it prove *glory* to *God*, *benefit* to *others*, and a *mercy* to *us*: *Oh my ſoule*, *thou haſt received*, *as it were*, *a new life*, *improve it in new obedience*; *health is reſtored to thy body*, *imploy it in the ſervice of thy God*: *why ſhould thy honey be turned into gall*, *thy ſhield into a ſword*, *thy delicates into poyſon*? *Oh let thy life be expended by thee*, *as it was intended*

Quis hoc vitæ quod, quibus rerum inſtrumentis noſtris &c. Salv. de Gub. l. 8. Pariſ. de Univerſo prim. part part tertia. c. 9. Petrarch dial. de valet. cons. Eſt pernitioſa ſæpius quæ ad inobedientiam ducit. Bern. de interdom.

by God, ſo ſhalt thou have cauſe to take up the Apoſtles language, God had mercy on me. And thus much ſhall ſuffice for the ſecond particular, I haſten to the

3. *Opportunity* of the *time*, which is the laſt branch implyed in the *exceptive But*. And a *comfortable But* it is; indeed, the *ſickneſſe*, like a *ſtoud* was *carrying* him away, *God* puts in a *But* and *ſtops* its current; *Epaphroditus* was *falling* into the *pit*, *But God* reacheth forth an *hand* to *uphold* him. *God* doth not *ſo preſerve* him that the *ſickneſſe* ſhould *not come*, nay, when it is *come* he doth not *hinder* it from *increaſing*, but when it is *come* to the *height*, then he *rebuketh* the *diſeaſe*, and ſaith, *hitherto thou ſhalt come and no further*. All *hopes* of his *recovery* in *mans eyes* are *periſhed*, and lo, he is *raiſed* by the *hand* of *God*. *Means* either are *not afforded*, or however *unable* to *help*. *God* becommeth his *Phyſitian*, and *commandeth* the *cure*. It lets us ſee thus much, that

Jo. 5.7. *Hin horam tuam domine, adeo enim deus cui homo deeſt.* Velaſq. in Phil. *Herodes genti Judaica invaſit regnum, libertatem ſuſtulit, prophetavit ſtellas; quicquid cultum eſt, abolevit, merito ergo gentil ſanctæ quia humana deſunt, divina ſuccurrunt.* Chriſol. ſerm. 136.

When all hopes are liveleſſe, and helps ſeem fruitleſſe, then is the ſeaſon of Gods deliverance. That *childs* condition is very *ſad*, *whom the father and mother forſake*; but then the *Pſalmiſt* finds *God ready* to *take him up*: And the *cauſall* particle in the Originall is very conſiderable, not onely *when*, but *becauſe* he was as a *forſaken* babe, *God* vouchſafeth to *protect* and *provide* for him; our *extremity* being not onely the *opportunity when*, but a *motive why* God will deliver. It was a dolefull *complaint* which the poore *Creeple* made to *Chriſt*, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω, *I have not a man to put me into the poole*, but even that *narration* is an efficacious *prayer*; *The abſence of mans help, being the ſeaſon of Chriſts preſence and ſuccour.* Saint *Paul* ſpeaking of our bleſſed Saviours *Incarnation*, ſaith, it was *when the fulneſſe of time came*; if you will know when that full time was, the *Evangeliſt* anſwereth, it was *in the dayes of Herod the King*: and if with *Chryſologus* you looke into thoſe dayes, you ſhall find them *dayes* of extreame *miſery* to the *Jewiſh* Nation, their *Temple profaned*, *Liberty ſuppreſſed*, *Worſhip aboliſhed*, and the *whole State full of confuſion*. In thoſe *dayes* was the *fulneſſe*, becauſe indeed the *fitneſſe* of time come for him, who was the *Redeemer*, to *appeare*, and the *horne of ſalvation to be raiſed up*. In which reſpect the *Meſſiah* is called by *Moſes* a

fit

fit man, or according to the *Originall*, *a man of opportunity*. *Thy way oh God is in the ſea, and thy paths in the great waters*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*. By which expreſſions no doubt he *chiefly* intends (as appeares by what followeth) to *note* the imperceptible *ſecrecie* attending upon many of *Gods* diſpenſations, ſo that we can *no more diſcerne* the *reaſon* of them, than we can any *impreſſion* of a *ſhips paſſage* in the *Sea*, but yet withall it is not an improbable *alluſion* to underſtand *Sea* and *great waters* repreſenting doleful and *perillous* diſtreſſes: Gods uſual courſe being to *manifeſt* himſelf not in the *ſhallow* river of a *ſlight* trouble, but the *deep* ſea of ſome *deſperate* calamity. The *Diſciples enter into a ſhip*, but *Chriſt comes not*, the ſable *mantle* of the *night* covers them, and *Chriſt cometh not*, the *winde* bloweth, the *ſtorme* rageth, the *waves* ariſe, and *yet Chriſt appeareth not*, but when they have *rowed* 25. *or* 30. *furlongs*, *being farre from land*, and in the *depth of danger*, then they *ſee Jeſus walking on the Sea*, and drawing *nigh* to the *ſhip* to *ſuccour* them. To this purpoſe is S. *Cyrills* obſervation upon this *ſtorie*, *Chriſt* doth not preſently at the *beginning* of the ſtorme *appeare* to his *Diſciples*, but when they had *rowed far from land*. *Chriſt* is not alwayes at *hand* upon the firſt *onſet*, but when through *prevailing fear*, & almoſt over-whelming *danger*, our *ſpirits* begin to *fail*, then he *breaks forth* as it were in the *midſt* of the *waves*, *calming* the *ſtorm*, *expelling* our *feare*, and *preventing* our *ruine*.

Pſal. 77. 19.

Ioh. 6. 19. ἐκπτάσει ὅτι ἐκ ἐοικότως ἐκπλήσσεται ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχῇ τῶν κινδύνων ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ σκάφει ὄντας καὶ ἐπιφοίτησιν. Cy. Alex. in Joh.

It is very obſervable in that hundred and ſeventh *Pſalme*, when the *Prophet* celebrateth *Gods* goodneſſe to *ſeverall* ſorts of men in their *dangers*, that their *deliverance* was not *vouchſafed* till their *danger* appeared *remedileſs*: of travellers it is ſaid, they *wandered ſo long in the wildernes, till by reaſon of hunger and thirſt their ſoule fainted in them, and then*, not till then upon their *crying the Lord delivered them*; The *Captives* are ſaid to *ſit in darkneſſe and the ſhadow of death, by reaſon of their bonds*, yea, to *fall downe and none to help them*, and *then* this *want of help obtaineth help*, at their earneſt *cry*. *God ſaveth them out of their diſtreſſe*; when *ſick*, men are brought ſo low that their *ſoule abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh to the gates of death*, then *God ſendeth his Word and healeth them*: finally, the *Seamans ſoule is melted becauſe of trouble, they reele*

Pſal. 107. 3, 4, 5. ὃ δὲ χωλεσμὸς τῆς ἀναγκαίας ἐυπορίας δύσθεια. Greg. Nyſſ. Tract in Pſ. ver. 10, 12, 13. ver. 18, 20.

to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, yea, are at their wits
Vers. 26. 27, 28, 29. *end*, not knowing what courſe to take, ere *God begins* to *make the ſtorme a calme*, and ſo *bringeth them out of their diſtreſſe*. Thus God, as he can, ſo uſually he doth help *at a pinch*, when *Jacob* wants *bread* at *home*, *Joſeph* is *heard* of *abroad*: when the *Prodigall* wants *abroad*, he is *minded* of *going home*; and
Pſal 142. 24. when we looke with *David on the right hand*, and *there is no man*, yea, on the left hand, nay round about us, and all refuge faileth us,

Reſtat iter cœlo,

we may *looke up* to *God*, and *God* is ready to *looke downe* from *heaven* and *help us*.

And now if you ſhall inquire *why God* is pleaſed to cull out *ſuch* a *time* of ſuccour, when in *extreame* perill, of *curing*, when *ſick nigh to death*: I *anſwer*, it is both in reference to *himſelfe* and *us*.

In regard of *himſelf*,

1. *Partly* that it may appeare to be *his worke*, Thoſe effects in the production of which, God is as it were *cauſa ſocia* a *copartner*, making uſe of *probable* meanes, too often the *inſtrument* is *more* looked upon than *God*; but thoſe effects wherein he is *cauſa ſolitaria*, the ſole agent (effecting them as it were by his owne hand) enforce men to acknowledge it is *his doing*. *Quando humana omnem ſpem negant, tunc divina diſpenſatio clare fulget*, In the *day*-time, when other *ſtarres* appeare not, we know the *light* which *ſhines* is onely from the *Sun*; ſo when *ſecundary* meanes ſucceed not to *whom* but *God* can the *patient aſcribe* his *recovery*? and for this reaſon, *ne opus cœleſtis dextra aſſignaretur virtuti humanæ*, that the *creature* may not *rob* him of *his glory*, *he chuſeth* that *time* to deliver when the creature can afford *no* ſuccour.

Velaſq. in Phil. *Permittit deus creſcere pericula ut periclitantium merita augeantur: extremè autem periclitantibus opem ſert ut ſuam potentiam demonſtret.* Mend in lib. 1. Reg. cap. 2. n. 6.

2. *Chiefly*, that in ſuch works he may appear *to be a God*, in as much as his *Almighty* power and mercy, hereby become *illuſtrious*: it is the prayer of *David*, *ſhew thy mevailous loving kindeneſſe*; the *Septuagint* and *vulgar* (agreeing in this with the *Hebrew*) render it, *make thy mercyes wonderfull*, and ſurely when our *miſery* is moſt *dolefull*, *Gods mercy* is moſt *wonderfull*, and therefore, ſaith Saint *Gregory*, *we moſt admire Gods*

Pſal 17. 7. Σαυμάσωσον τὰ ἐλέη σου. Sept. *Mirifica miſericordias tuas*, Vulg.

benignity,

benignity, when we call to minde our calamity: indeed *God* bringeth us *nigh to death*, that we may *know our ſelves* how fraile and mortall we are, that he may *know us*, or rather *make knowne to us and others* our *graces*, and when we are *nigh to death* he hath *mercy*, that we may *know him*, not onely *ſpeculatively*, but *experimentally*, how *great* and *mighty*, how *good* and *gracious* be is. The truth is, *Omnipotenti medico nullum vulnus inſanabile*, *No wound is incurable to this omnipotent Phyſitian*: and that he may appeare to be ſo, he often *deferreth* the cure till *humane* skill and helpe *faileth*. In *ſuch* deliverances, the *characters* of *Gods almighty* goodneſſe are *plainly* written ſo, that the blind *Egyptians* can *read* them; and therefore ſeeing the *Iſraelites* eſcape an imminent danger they acknowledge the *Lord fighteth for them*.

In reſpect of *us*, that the *deliverance* may be the more *acceptable* to *us*, as well as *honourable* to *him*, *To every thing*, ſaith *Solomon*, *there is a ſeaſon*, and indeed it is the *ſeaſon* that putteth a *beauty* upon *every thing*; in this regard, that of the Prophet *quam ſpecioſi*, *how beautifull are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings*, is rendered by *Tertullian*, *quam tempeſtivi*, *how opportune*, that which is *ſeaſonable* being ever *beautifull*; indeed in every opportune mercy there is a *double* beauty, the *one* in the *thing* conferred, the *other* in the *time* of conferring it. It is the *prayer* of the *Church* to *God*, *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh with thy glorie and thy majeſty*, which latter words the *vulgar* latine reads *cum ſpecie tua & pulchritudine tua*, that is to ſay, *with thy beauty and thy beauty*: and this is then moſt fully verified, when *God girds his ſword* to *defend* his *Church* in her *loweſt* miſery, and *offend* his *enemies* in their *higheſt* inſolency. It is a *ſweet* and choice expreſſion of the *Prophet*, *The Lord will wait that he may be gracious*, which though it be *chiefly* intended of his *forbearing judgement*, yet it is no leſſe true of his *withholding mercy*: God therefore oft times *delaying*, that he may *appeare* the *more gracious* in *beſtowing* deliverance; ſo true is that of the *Father*, *Deus cum differt non negat, ſed commendat dona*, *God in ſuſpending intends not to deny, but onely to commend his mercy*. *Abrahams childe* was more *welcome* at *ſeaventy*, than if he had been given at *thirty*, and the ſame *Iſaac*

Tunc noſtra miſericordia dei miniſterium tum nobis ad memoriam miſeriæ noſtræ revocatur. Greg hom. 1. in Ezech. *Nihil extat quod Dei potentiam vincat, nihil quod omnipotenti illi manui obſiſtere valeat.* Sophr. Arch. hom. in Bibl. pat.

τί τούτου θαυμαστότερον ἢ μᾶλλον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ μεγαλοδωρίας τοιοῦτον ὅταν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων θέλῃ τοῖς δοῦναι τοῖς πρόσθεν. Greg. Naz. Orat 32.

Iſa. 52. 7. Tertul. contra Mar. l. 5. c 2. Pſal 45. 3. Iſa. 30. 18.

ἦν γὰρ ὅτε καὶ χαρίσασθαι ἔδοξε καὶ ἐπιδοῦναι τὴν σωτηρίαν πᾶσαν ἀνθρώπῳ τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ

ζῶν ἐλπίδα περιεπολεμήθη· ὅθεν καὶ τῆς φόβου. Cyr. Alex. in Joh. 6. 19.

Iſaac had not beene ſo *precious*, had he not been as *miraculouſly reſtored* as *given*. *In fine*, the *language* of a *depopulating* warre is the beſt *rhetorick* to *extoll* the *bleſſing* of *peace*, how *welcome* is a *calme* to the *Marriner* after a *bluſtering* ſtorme? and *health* is never ſo *amiable*, as when it brings *letters of commendation* from a *long* and *dangerous ſickneſſe*.

Eraſm. ſimil.

To apply this, It is a *meditation* which ſhould encourage us to *truſt* in *God*, even when *things* are at the *worſt*, and though all other ſuccours faile, not to let goe our hold of him: As *Apelles* ſtriving to paint a *drop* of *foam* falling from a *Horſes* mouth, after long ſtudy, *deſpairing*, let his *pencill* fall, and that *fall* did it, *Quod aſſequi non potuit caſus expreſſit*, effecting by *chance* what he could not by *art*, and when both *nature* and *art* can goe *no further*, divine *providence* undertaketh, nay, *effecteth* the *worke*, and therefore, as the *Apoſtle* ſaith of *joy*, I ſay of *hope*, *hope alwayes in the Lord*, indeed, *magnæ indolis eſt ſperare ſemper*, it is an argument of an *heroick* minde, to hope *alwayes*, and of a *pious* minde to place that *hope* on *God*; *David* ſaith of *himſelfe*, I *have hoped in thy word*, the *Septuagint* read it ἐπήλπισα, and the *vulgar* Latine accordingly *ſuperſperavi*, which as S. *Ambroſe* interpreteth it, is *ad ſperandum ſemper creſcere & ſpem ſpei adjungere*, *to add hope to hope*, *& that even then when affliction is added to affliction*: Excellent to this purpoſe is that *counſel* of the *Greeke* Father, *When externall means are leaſt*, *let thy confidence be greateſt*, *for then God diſplayeth his power moſt*, *not at the beginning*, *but when things are deſperate*, *for this is the ſeaſon of divine help*. It is our great *fault* that in *diſmall* dangers we *open* the *eye* of *ſenſe*, and onely *pore* upon the *extremity* of the *trouble*, whereas it becometh a *Saint*, even then to *open* the *eye* of *faith*, and *looke* upon the *energy* of *Gods power*.

Phil. 3 1. Flor. l 4 c. 8.

Juſtus ſemper ſperat & in adverſis præſentibus & frequentibus afflictionum aerumnis ad ſperandum novit. Ambr. in Pſ. 118. oct. 19.

ὅταν εἰς ἀπορίαν τὰ πράγματα ἀμήχανα τότε μάλιστα ἐλπίζε. &c. Chryſ. in Pſal. 117.

And to carry it one ſtep further, Let even the *depth* of *miſery* be an *incouragement* to our *confidence*, in as much as that is a *time* of deliverance: when the *night* is at the *darkeſt*, we know *day-break* is *neareſt*, the *lowneſſe* of the *ebbe* argueth the *flowing* in of the *tide* to be at hand: ſo may we *conclude* divine *ſuccour approaching* from the *premiſſes* of a grievous *calamity encompaſſing*. We read in the *viſion* of the *wheel*, which *Ezekiel*

Ezek. 1 16.

ſaw

ſaw there was a *wheele in the middeſt of a wheele*, by which two wheeles *Juſtin Martyr* underſtandeth the *Jewes captivity* in *Babylon*, and their *reſtitution* to their owne *Country*, and *one wheele is ſaid to be in the midſt of the other*, as if their *returne* were *ingraven* in their very *bondage*, whileſt the *one* gave hope of the *other*. *Strange*, but yet *comfortable* is the *Promiſe*, which *God* maketh to his *Church*, *I will give her the valley of Achor for a doore of hope*. *Achor* ſignifieth *confuſion*, *perturbation*; and yet this will *God* make, *a doore of hope*, whileſt that *perturbation* proveth but a ſad *Prologue* to a joyfull *reſtauration*. *Strange*, but yet *ſtrong* was the *faith* which the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſeth, where he ſaith, *Though an hoſte ſhould encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not feare, though warre ſhould riſe againſt me, in this will I be confident*: Loe here, a *ſoule* like the *ark* riſing with the waters, the *encamping* of an *hoſte* is *terrible*, and yet *David feareth not*: the *riſing up* of *warre* is yet more dangerous; and *David* will not onely *not feare*, but be *confident*: Nor yet (which is very obſervable) doth he ſay *in God*, but *in this*, that is the very *warre it ſelfe will I be confident*, as knowing, that when the enemy did not onely *encamp about*, but *warre againſt* him (ſo that either *he* muſt *periſh*, or *God* muſt *help*) it would not be long ere the *wiſdome* of the *Almighty* would *finde* out a *way* to *reſcue* him. Not much unlike this, is that reſolution of holy *Job*, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him*; *death* and *hope* ſeeme to be at the greateſt *diſtance*, and yet here they are brought *together*: *death* could not *kill Job's hope*, nay, according to *Pagnines* reading of the *Hebrew* text, *Ecce occidet me*, *behold he will ſlay me*; *death* it ſelfe giveth *life* to his *hope*, and becometh a *prop* for his *confidence*.

Let this be our practiſe at leaſt, *indeavouring* to attaine this *high* pitch of *faith* and dependance on *God*. True it is, if we *behold* the ſad condition of this *Church* at *this day*, we ſhall find many *dying* Symtomes upon it; *Hereſie* hath *poyſoned* it, *Sacrilege ſtarved* it, *Schiſme wounded* it, yea, a licentious *toleration* almoſt *ſtrangled* it: And I doubt not but the *people of God mourne* in ſecret for theſe abominations; and yet (to uſe Saint *Paul's* expreſſions on another occaſion) *Let us not ſorrow as*

δείκνυσι τῷ προφήτῃ τροχὸν ἐν τῷ τροχῷ μηνύων δι αὐτῶν τὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπαγωγὴν εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἀπαγωγὴν εἰς τὰ ἴδια. Juſtin. Mart. qu. 44.

Ibi aperta eſt ſpes ubi fuerat deſperatio. Hier. ibid. Hoſ. 2. 15.

Pſal. 27. 2. *Si ſurrexerit ſuper me bellum, in illud ego ſperabo.* Sic legit. Cypr. de exort. Mart.

Job tot gravium incommodorum acerbitatibus pio ſpem cumulabat afflictu. Ambr. in Pſal. 118.

1 Theſ. 4. 13.

John 11.4: *without hope*, that this *ſickneſſe* of our *Church* (like that of *Lazarus*) ſhall not be to *death*, but to the *glory* of *God*, when the

Pſal. 102.13. *ſet time to have mercy upon Sion ſhall come.* Againe, it cannot be *denyed* (oh that it were more *lamented*) our *land* is *deſolate*, and *nigh* to ruine, the *whole head is ſick, and the heart is faint, from the ſoale of the foot even to the head there is no ſoundneſſe in it, but wounds and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores*; and yet *there is hope* in this matter, *confidat qui agit pœnitentiam, quia erit tempus ſalvandi.* Let all penitent *mourners* believe, and *expect a day of ſalvation*: Finally, none of us but may at ſome time or other be brought *low*, and in this particular of the *text*, be *ſick nigh to death*: Oh let us *treaſure* up this *truth*, as a *cordiall* againſt that *evil* day, and learne, even in our *fainting* fits, to *incourage our ſelves in the Lord our God.*

Hier. in Pſ.101 *Conſtitutis in extremo periculo deus ſuccurrit memorabili bonitatis exemplo, quo nos in ſimili diſcrimine poſiti erigamur, ſcientes Deum non defuturum noſtris neceſſitatibus, etiam in ſolitudine, modo ad eum precibus confugiamus.* Pax. in lec. 2 Sam. 30.2. Gen. 21.15,16. *Hoc apud Hebræos exivit in proverbium: ut ſi quando in anguſtia conſtituti eſſent & Domini opem auxilio ſublevari dicerent in monte, Dominus videbit, hoc eſt ſicut Abrahæ miſertus eſt miſerebitur & noſtri.* Hieron. in quæſt. Hebr. Gen 22.14. Exod. 2.3.

And becauſe *examples* are great *incouragements* as well of *faith* as *obedience*, ſince as we are *incited* to *doe* what *others* have *done*, ſo we are animated to *hope* what others have *experienced* before us: give me leave to mind you of ſeveral *inſtances* in the *book* of *God*, which *evidence* the *truth* of this comfortable *aſſertion*.

Were not *Hagar* and her *Sonne* in a *periſhing* eſtate, when turned *out* of *Abrahams houſe* into a dry *wilderneſſe*, onely with a *little bread*, and a *bottle of water*, nay, when the *bottle* was *empty* and none to *repleniſh*? Now it is that *Hagar* giveth her *ſelfe*, and her *childe*, for *loſt*, leaving him under a *buſh*, that ſhe might not heare him *cry*, nor ſee his *death*, and reſolving to *ſpend* the little *remainder* of her owne *dayes* in *teares*. *But loe*, when at this *pinch* an *Angel appeareth*, *openeth* her *eyes*, and inſtead of a *bottle* ſhe hath a *well* full of *water* for her *owne* and her *Sons* preſervation.

Was not *Iſaac nigh to death*, when *bound* hand and foot, yea, *laid* upon the *Altar*? nay, his *Fathers hand* ſtretched forth to *take* his *knife* and *cut* his *throat*; it is but a little *while*, and one *ſtroake* had let out *blood* and *life* together. *But ſee, in the mount of the Lord it is ſeene*, ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, *God* as it were from an *ambuſh*, *calls* unexpectedly from *heaven*, and by a *word* in *ſeaſon* at once *ſtops* the *Fathers* hand, and *ſaves* the *Childes* life.

In what great danger of *death* was *Moſes*, when his *parents* laid

laid him by the *rivers* brinke with no other *shelter* but an *arke of bulrushes*: how *likely* is this helpleſſe *Babe* to be *ſtarved* with *cold*, or *tumble* into the *river*, or be *devoured* with a wild *beaſt*? *But behold*, whileſt the *childe* is in this imminent *danger*, and the *parents* in perplexing *feare*, *providence* ſo ordereth it, that *Pharaoh's daughter* becometh as a *mother* to the *child*, and the *childes mother* is appointed to be his *nurſe*, whereby his *life* is preſerved.

How *nigh* in all probability was the *Iſraelites deſtruction*, when *before* them a *Sea*, through which there could be no *wading*, on either *ſide mountaines*, over which there was no *climbing*, behinde them a mighty *hoſte*, *with* whom there is no *conteſting*, and yet *from* whom no meanes left of *eſcaping*. *But loe*, in this *depth* of *miſery God* hath *mercy* on them, even to a *miracle*; the *ſea divideth*, and at once becometh the Iſraelites *paſſage*, and Egyptians *grave*.

How *ſmall* did the *diſtance* ſeeme betweene *Ionah* and *death*, when the *mercifull marriners* were *enforced* for *ſaving* their *owne* lives to *caſt* him into the *mercileſſe Sea*, and yet there he *finketh not*, a *divine hand* as it were *holding* him by the *chinne*, when in the *Sea ſwallowed* by a greedy *Whale*, and there hee *dyeth not*; *God* would not *deliver* him from the *tempeſt*, he will from the *Whale*; that which was moſt *likely* to *conſume* him becometh the *meanes* to *preſerve* him, within *three dayes* the *Whale* delivereth him *ſafe*, *whole*, and *alive* upon dry *ground*.

Who ever *thought* to have ſeene thoſe *three worthies alive* after they *fell downe bound into the midſt of a fiery burning furnace*? *But behold* a *martyrdome effected without dying*, whileſt a *fourth like the Sonne of God appeareth*, at whoſe *command* the *fire forgetteth* to *burne*, or ſo much as *ſcorch*.

Who did not *expect* but that *Daniel* being *caſt into a denne of* ravenous *Lions*, ſhould be *devoured* before the next *morning*, nay, the next *houre*? *But ſee*, the *Lyons mouthes are ſtopped by an Angel*, and ſince they cannot feed *Daniel*, are forced to *keep* a *faſt with* him.

Were not *Paul* and his *company* in great *jeopardy* of *death*, when the thick *clouds* had for *many* dayes *obſcured* the light of

Quid mirabilius omittere potuit illa, quæ cum dolore puerum expoſuerat, nunc cum gaudio eum recipit. Fer. Conn. Exod 2 8. Exod 14 21. *Aquæ quas timebantur dextrâ lævâq; famulis dei murus effectæ, non ſolum pernitiem neſciunt, ſed & munimen exhibent.* Orig. hom. in Exod. *Patiemur ſuſtinuit abſorbvi Ionam à cete non ut abſorberetur & in totum periret, ſed ut evomitum magis, ſubigeretur Deo, & plus glorificaret deum qui inſuperabilem ſalutem ei dediſſet.* Iræn. adv. hæres l. 3 c. 22. *O martyrium & ſine paſſione perfectum, ſatis paſſis ſatis exuſtis ſunt, quos propterea Deus texit, ne poteſtatem ejus mentiri videretur.* Tertul. Scorp. cap. 8. *Venit Leo & ſubvertit ſcenam*

Sun and *Starres* from them, the violent ſtormes exceedingly toſſed the *Ship*, enforced them to *caſt* out the *goods*, yea, *every moment* they expect *themſelves* to be made a *prey* to the roring *waves*; *all hope that they ſhould be ſaved being taken away? but behold*, that night *an Angell of God ſtandeth by Paul*, and from *God aſſures him of his and their preſervation.*

To come yet *nearer* to the *inſtance* of the *Text*:

It was no ſlight *ſickneſſe* afflicted *David*, when he ſaid, *My heart panteth, my ſtrength faileth me, as for the light of mine eyes it is gone from me*; the *diſeaſe* (it ſeemeth) had *ſeized* upon all his *ſpirits*, his *animals* in the *dimneſſe* of his *eyes*, his *naturall* in the *failing* of his *ſtrength*, his *vitall* in the *panting* of his *heart*; and ſurely then *it* muſt needes *bring* him very *nigh to death*; yea, it ſeemeth *David feared* it, which made him ſo earneſtly pray againſt it in another *Pſalm*: But when *death* is *near*, *God* is *neare* too, *hearing* his *prayer*, and *preſerving* his *life*.

It is ſaid of *Hezekiah*, that he was *ſick unto death*, the *diſeaſe* was *ſuch* that he *reckoned his bones ſhould be broken, and an end made of him*, yea, he *received* a *ſentence* of *death* from *God* by the *Prophet*, *Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt dye and not live*: *But* that *threat* was onely like *Abrahams precept*, not a *declaration* of what *God intended* to doe, but onely a *probation* to try what *Hezekiah* would *doe*; and therefore notwithſtanding the *diſeaſe* was *deadly*, *God* becometh his *Phyſitian*, preſcribeth a *plaiſter of figgs*, and *Hezekiah* is *healed*.

The *Centurions* Sonne is viſited with a *Feaver*; that *Feaver* bringeth him to the very *point of death*, when as at the *Centurions* intreaty, *Chriſt* with a *word commands* his *recovery*.

That *womans* condition was *deſperate*, when ſhe was at once brought *low* in *eſtate* and *body*: her *goods* are *gone*, her *diſeaſe continueth*, the *Phyſitians* have *emptied* her *purſe*, but cannot *ſtay* her *flux*, nor is there any likelyhood but that this *ſickneſs* will at length *bring* her to her *grave*. *But* her *deplorable* ſtate is a fit *occaſion* for *Chriſt* to magnifie his *mercy*, whileſt by a *believing touch* of his *garment* he maketh her perfectly *whole*.

Finally, *Martha* ſends *Chriſt* word that *Lazarus is ſick*; *Chriſt delayeth* to *come*, onely lets her know *this ſickneſſe ſhould be*

ob ore koṽs: Rab. in Lap. ſuper loc. Ὅσον καλὲ τὴν φύσιν τῶ πεαγμαλ& ἀπώλουτο ἀν ἀλλ' ὁ θέος ἐκώλυσεν. Chryſ. in Act. *Quod genus morbi & naturæ vires attinet prorſus eſſet moriturus niſi ſingulari dei conſilio ſervaretur.* Muſc. in loc. *Solo juſſu ſalutẽ reddidit qui voluntate omnia creavit.* Greg. Mag. in Evan. hom. 28. *Poſt certamina deſperata medicorum poſt medicamina ſumptuoſa, poſt inanem & antiquiſſimã curam ubi ars et peritia deſe erat jam curantum ubi languentis omnis jam conſumpta fuerat ſubſtantia ipſi auctori reverendum vultus non caſu ſed divinitus occurrit, ut quod humana arte aut annis curari non potu-*

be for Gods glory: being *ſick* he *dyeth*, *dying* is *buried*, and having been ſome dayes *buried* he *rotteth*, nay *ſtinketh in the grave*; and *now* is the *time* come for *Chriſt* by his powerfull *voice* to *raiſe* him from the ſleep of *death*, and bed of the *grave*.

Loe here, *more* than a *Jury* of *textuall* witneſſes, to which many *more* might be *added* (*beſides* this in the *Text*) all *aſſerting* this *truth*, and thereby *aſſuring* our *faith* of *Gods deliverance* in the worſt *extremity*. To all which give me *leave* to *adde one more*, even my *owne* late *experience* of *Gods marvailous kindeneſſe* vouchſafed to me.

It is not many *weekes* agoe ſince it *pleaſed* the wiſe *God* to *viſit* me with a ſore and violent *Feaver*; that *Feaver* ſo *exhauſted* my *ſpirits*, and *enervated* my *body*, that I might well *take* up *Davids* expreſſion, *There was but a ſtep betweene me and death*: Much about that *time* when the *dayes* of the *yeare* are at the *longeſt*, the *dayes* of my *life* ſeemed to be at the *ſhorteſt*. Thus was the *firſt* part of this *Text verified*, *I was ſick nigh to death*, indeed *ſo nigh*, that I was *as a dead* man in the *opinion* of the *learned*, yea, actually *dead* and *buried* in the *report* of the *vulgar*, and truly I had *ere this* beene not onely *fowre dayes* with *Lazarus*, but *more* than *four weeks putrifying* in the *grave*, had not *divine goodneſſe* prevented: *But God had mercy on me*, and ſo the *other part* of my *Text* is likewiſe fulfilled: when the *ſickneſſe* had almoſt *weighed* me downe into the *pit*, *God* was pleaſed to *put* a *graine* of *mercy* and *turne* the *ſcale*, ſo that *I* am here (beloved) *this day*, before *God*, *Angels*, and *men*, as a *bird eſcaped* out of a ſtrong *ſnare*, as a *prey plucked* out of the *jawes* of a devouring *Lion*, as a *brand ſnatched* out of the *fire* of a burning *feaver*.

What therefore *remaineth*, but that as in the *beginning*, ſo now in the *cloſe* of this *diſcourſe* I *take* up a *gratulation*, *Bleſs the Lord oh my ſoul, and let all that is within me praiſe his holy name*; when I *forget* to *mention this deliverance*, *let my right hand forget its cunning*; when I *ceaſe* (as *opportunity* offereth it ſelfe) to *publiſh this mercy*, *let my tongue cleave to the roofe of my mouth*; nor yet would *I* be *alone*, in this work of *praiſe*; do *you* (all you here preſent) *joyne* with me. I doubt not but *many*, the *moſt*, nay

is, ſola fides & humiliatio curet retur. Chryſoſt. Serm. 33.

Videris quem admodum det locum morti, licentiam det ſepulchro, corruptioni poſſe permittit, negat nil put edini, nil fœtori: atque ut Tartarus rapiat, trahat, habeat, admittit, atque agit, ut humana ſpes tota pereat, et tota vis mundanæ deſperationis accedat, quatenus quod factum eſt divinum ſit, non humanum. Chryſoſt. ſerm. 63.

2 Sam 20. 3. *Sume the 10.* my diſeaſe was at the higheſt.

Pſal. 103. 1. 137. 5, 6.

nay *all* of you in ſome *kinde*, at ſome *time* or other, have had *experience* of eminent *deliverances*: oh *call* them now to *mind*, & let your gratefull *remembrance* come up as a *memoriall before the Lord*: I doubt not but *many* of you, yea, *very many*, did *put* up *prayers*, fervent prayers at the *throne of grace* for this *mercy* (which I now *celebrate*) my *recovery*. Indeed *brethren*, I look upon my *health*, as S. *Paul* on his *preſervation*, as a *gift* 2 Cor. 1. 11. *beſtowed on me by the meanes* (to wit, for the ſakes and prayers) *of many*; and ſurely as *prayers* have been *made*, ſo *fit* it is *thanksgiving* ſhould be *returned* by *many* on *my behalfe*, it were a *ſhame* to be *zealous* in *begging* and *cold* in *bleſſing*; to *cry* aloud *give us our dayly bread*, and onely *whiſper hallowed be thy name*. *Bleſſed* therefore be the *Lord God* of his unworthy ſervant, *who* Pſal. 72. 18, 19. *alone doth wondrous things*; yea, *bleſſed be his glorious name for ever*, and let all that have beene *petitioners for* me *ſay with* me at *leaſt* in their *hearts*, *Amen, Amen.*

And now my *Dearly beloved Pariſhioners*, *and freinds in the Lord*, what is my *deſire*, but that *you* may have *cauſe* in *alluſion* to the following *words* of this *verſe*, to ſay, *God had mercy, not on him onely, but us alſo*; that *my preſervation* may be for *your edification*, as well for *my conſolation*: that *you*, who have *already* found *benefit* by my weak *Miniſtery*, may be more *ſtrengthned*; and thoſe, who have heretofore been *unprofitable*, may now be *bettered*. Which that it may be ſo, it ſhall be *my endeavour*: let it be *your prayer* for me, *that I may doe this worke of Chriſt more diligently and faithfully than ever*; it ſhall be *my prayer* for you, let it be *your endeavour* to *heare the Word of Chriſt more attentively and obediently for the time to come*. So ſhall *you* have *cauſe* to *bleſſe God* for *me*, and *I* to *bleſſe God* for *you*. Yea at that *laſt* and great *day* you ſhall have *joy* in *me*, if my *preaching* become a *means* of your *converſion* and *ſalvation*; and *I* ſhall have *joy* in *you*, whoſe *converſion* and *ſalvation* ſhall prove an *increaſe* of my *reward*, and an *addition* to my *glorie*. Which God grant, &c.

F I N I S.